Ratnākara's *Haravijaya*

An Introduction to the Sanskrit Court Epic

DAVID SMITH

This book is the first major study of an important aspect of Indian culture, the Sanskrit court epic. Focusing on the long-neglected *Haravijaya*, David Smith begins a fundamental revaluation of classical Sanskrit poetry. He subjects the formal poetics (*Alaṃkāra-śāstra*) to a radical critique and frees the poetry for detailed and sympathetic consideration. The poetry is approached in several ways: as an expression of court society, as a religious statement, as symbolism and, not least, in its own terms.

The *Haravijaya*'s theme is Śiva's destruction of the demon Andhaka, aided by the Goddess. The poet Ratnākara, writing in ninth-century Kashmir, set out to achieve a masterpiece. His attempt is studied here in a lively way that renders the poem accessible to all interested in Indian culture and in poetry and religion in general.

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Introduction

The Sanskrit court epic is an important but neglected manifestation of Indian civilization. This book is an attempt to portray and explain one such poem. It is a study of the *Haravijaya*,[1] 'Śiva's Victory', a Sanskrit court epic written in Kashmir in the ninth century A.D. by a poet called Ratnākara.

The genre of Sanskrit court epic, or *mahākāvya* (literally, 'great poem') has aroused a wide variety of responses. Often composed and much admired in India and wherever Sanskrit culture spread, the court epic incurred the hostility of several Indian poeticians and has found little favour with modern readers. It was my original intention to study *mahākāvya* in general, a literary form all the more interesting on account of the fierceness of criticism it has provoked. However, I was soon struck by the remarkably individual quality of each of the *mahākāvyas* I read. The exceptional merit of Kālidāsa's two *mahākāvyas* has, of course, always been appreciated, but in modern times the subsequent history of the genre has been held to be an abrupt descent into increasing uniformity. On the contrary, most of the *mahākāvyas* I looked at seemed to deserve individual treatment in depth, and I took the view that a general literary study would be premature, if not impossible.

Some general account of the genre is of course necessary, and I shall reveal the essential features of the court epic. But it is only on the basis of the proper understanding of individual works of art and individual authors that Sanskrit poetry can be truly appreciated. This is especially the case with the court epic, which is complex and remote from us. The eight chapters I devote to the *Haravijaya* can only be a preliminary view.

Equally essential, I believe, is an open approach. Sanskrit poetics, which has in modern times attracted far more scholarly attention than the poetry, is not a help but a hindrance.[2] My procedure has been principally that of reading and re-reading

[1] Ed. Durgaprasad and K. P. Parab, commentary by Alaka (*Viṣamapadoddyota*), Kāvya Mālā 22 (Bombay, 1890).

[2] See below, Chapter 2; and also my 'Classical Sanskrit Poetry and the Modern Reader', in *Contributions to South Asian Studies II*, ed. Gopal Krishna (Delhi, 1982), pp. 1–24.

the poetry, 'living with it' in F. R. Leavis' words, until the *Haravijaya* has taken on for me a definite shape and character which further readings serve only to strengthen. This approach has been admirably described by the author of a classic study of Baroque literature:

> Neither the author nor the critic know in advance what they will find at the end of the operation. The critical procedure must not exist prior to the analysis. The fruitful reading should be a total reading. ... Whatever the nature of the text and the rhythm at which we experience it, what is required of us is always participation in the existence of a spiritual being which we can only understand through an act of total assent, excluding, at least provisionally, all judgement. ... The penetrating reader enters into the work [s'installe dans l'œuvre] to marry the movements of an imagination ...[3]

We may recall here Ernst Curtius' inspiring words: 'The "timeless present" which is an essential characteristic of literature means that the literature of the past can always be active in that of the present. ... With the literature of all times and peoples I can have a direct, intimate, and engrossing relationship ...'.[4]

Professor Ingalls has spoken of Sanskrit poetry as the sleeping princess of fairy story. He modestly departs from the implications of his metaphor (whereby, surely, he himself as translator is the prince whose kiss awakens) by saying simply that all that is required is to let the princess speak for herself Ingalls succeeds admirably and his introduction to and translation of Vidyākara's anthology, *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*,[5] have revitalized the study of *kāvya*.

An anthology, of course, is meant to be an accessible text. Around the work I have chosen to exemplify the court epic, the hedge of thorns seems especially impenetrable. Ratnākara wrote the *Haravijaya* in Kashmir in the ninth century A.D. The poem was popular in Kashmir and elsewhere for centuries, as verses written in Ratnākara's praise show. But in 1915, Richard

[3] Jean Rousset, *Forme et Signification* (Paris, 1962), pp. XII and XIV. (All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.)

[4] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1953), pp. 14 ff. (I have reversed the order of the sentences.)

[5] Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry* (a translation of the *Subhaṣitaratnakoṣa* of Vidyākara), (Cambridge, Mass., 1965). Ingalls refers to Sleeping Beauty on p. 1.

Schmidt declared it to be 'a real monster',[6] and A. B. Keith in 1928 thought it 'a hopeless blunder'.[7] Keith concluded his brief treatment of the poem with these words: 'No more striking instance exists than this of the utter lack of proportion which can afflict the minds of poets with considerable technical facility and abundant knowledge.'[8] Far from dealing with the Sleeping Beauty, might not my own part in resurrecting this monster of a poem be rather that of a Frankenstein? The reader, I believe, need have no such fear. The *Haravijaya*'s principal sin is its extent: it is the longest of the *mahākāvyas* with fifty cantos (*sargas*) and 4351 verses; but this size, a fault in the eyes of the unsympathetic, poses no problem for us in analysis and discussion. The poem's notoriety lends an edge to this study. The reputation of all other *mahākāvyas* should benefit from a better appreciation of the worst of the genre!

My own judgement, however, is at variance with the opinions of Schmidt and Keith. Although I feel that a final judgement of Ratnākara must rest on wider and deeper knowledge than I can at present claim, my provisional estimate of the *Haravijaya* is very high indeed.

All subsequent histories of Sanskrit literature echo Keith,[9] but I am glad to say that I am in accord with the traditional Indian view. Rājaśekhara, the famous playwright and poetician (late ninth century) complimented Ratnākara thus:

> Thinking the four oceans were not enough,
> the creator
> made another ocean,
> the poet Ratnākara.[10]

[6] 'Neue oder im PW. noch nicht belegte Wörter aus Ratnākaras Haravijaya', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenländes*, Vol. 29, 1915, p. 260.

[7] A. Berriedale Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Oxford, 1928), p. 135.

[8] Ibid.

[9] An exception is a recent work on Sanskrit literature which speaks of the *Haravijaya* as the best of *mahākāvyas* both in point of length and of quality: 'haravijayakāvyaṃ saṃskṛtakāvyeṣu parimāṇato guṇataś ca śreṣṭhaṃ manyate.' Rāmacandra Miśra, *Saṃskṛtasāhityetihāsa* (Varanasi, 1970), p. 55.

[10] *Sūktimuktāvalī* (Jalhaṇa's anthology) 4.71:

> mā sma santi hi catvāraḥ prāyo ratnākarā ime/
> itīva sa kṛto dhātrā kavī ratnākaro'paraḥ//

Ratnākara, it should be explained, means 'Ocean'. Ratnākara literally means 'mine of jewels' (*ratna-ākara*), a synonym for 'ocean', which was held to produce not only pearls but all precious stones. Doubtless Ratnākara felt himself, as did those who applauded his work, to be Ocean, Mine of Jewels, by nature! As we shall see, the core of the poem is a description of the merging into one body of Śiva and his consort Pārvatī (*sarga* 21); the *sarga* immediately following is a description of the ocean. From this description of the ocean the poet might have received the sobriquet Ratnākara. Alternatively, as I prefer to think, his name was already Ratnākara, and he thus juxtaposed himself as Ocean in *sarga* 22 to Śiva and Pārvatī in *sarga* 21 deliberately, because he and all of us according to Kashmir Śaivism, are Śiva in a oneness often spoken of as the ocean of bliss. As Utpala (late ninth-century Kashmiri, poet, mystic, and philosopher) says, Śiva is an ocean of bliss, and those who know Śiva are plunged into it.'[11]

There are other verses which praise Ratnākara.[12] The editors of the *Haravijaya* cited, in 1890, a contemporary opinion:

> Not a thousand milk oceans,
> nor ten thousand springtimes
> shining with flowers,
> nor ten million splendid moons of autumn,
> not a hundred lovely golden pots full of nectar
> in Dhanvantari's hand,
> no, not a hundred thousand Merus,
> are worth the poem of the excellent poet Ratnākara.[13]

The verse just cited comes near to being a compendious description of *kāvya* as a whole. Sanskrit poetry is full of good things, of which these are the principal: the ocean of milk, the seasons, the nectar of immortality, and the golden mountain Meru.

[11] *Śivastotrāvalī* 1.6:

> anantānandasindhos te nātha tattvaṃ vidanti te/
> tādṛśā eva ye sāndrabhaktyānandarasāplutāḥ/ /

[12] Kṣemendra commends his use of the Vasantatilaka metre (*Suvṛttatilaka*, 3.3). See also Baldeva Upādhyāya, *Saṃskṛt Sukavi Samīkṣā* (Varanasi, 1963), p. 552.

[13] The verse is by Sadāśivaśaṅkaraśāstrin:

> dugdhābdhīnāṃ sahasraṃ na kusumalasitaṃ sadvasantāyutaṃ vā
> koṭir vā pārvaṇānāṃ suṣamaśaśabhṛtāṃ neṣadoṣātanānām/
> sampūrṇaṃ vā sudhābhiḥ puraṭaghaṭaśataṃ hanta dhvanvantarerno
> pāṇisthaṃ cāru ratnākarasukavigirāṃ merulakṣaṃ na mūlyam/ /

Haravijaya ed. Durgaprasad and Parab, p. 1.

A neutral position on the *Haravijaya* was taken by Georg Bühler, reputed to have read everything extant in Sanskrit, who in 1877 discovered the *Haravijaya* to the West. His cautious comment was, 'It seems to me not likely that the *Haravijaya as a whole* will ever gain many friends among Europeans. But it contains, like most Sanskrit poems, many single verses and passages which possess both grace and force of expression.'[14] (Italics mine). The aim of my study is to gain friends for the *Haravijaya* 'as a whole'.

Before setting out the plan of this study, it is only proper to give precedence to the poem itself, which will not be known to the general reader. I proffer Keith's summary, despite his evident air of distaste, because it presents the prima facie view (*pūrvapakṣa*) I wish to counter.

> The theme is of the lightest, the slaying of the demon Andhaka, born of Śiva when Pārvatī playfully covered his eyes with her hands. The child thus unhappily born blind grows up, by austerities wins sight, and becomes master of the three worlds until, as usual, Śiva finds it necessary to kill him. The plan is the same scheme we have seen already [in earlier *mahākāvyas*]; Śiva's capital must be described (i), then his Tāṇḍava dance (ii), the seasons (iii), and mount Mandara (iv, v). Then comes in the *motif* of the appeal of the seasons, headed by spring, to Śiva for protection against the new conqueror. Śiva's counsellors now debate, and the poet has up to Canto xvi to display his perfection in the art of politics. After all the talk an envoy is dispatched to the demon to bid him retire from the realms he has usurped. Here is the moment for the usual digression, and we have thirteen cantos of the sports of the retinue of Śiva, precisely of the same sort already recorded [in Keith's treatment of earlier *mahākāvyas*], including sunrise, sunset, the stormy sea, and a very careful exposition of the practice of the Kāmaśāstra in xxix. The envoy at last reaches the demon's kingdom in heaven, which necessarily must be described at length (xxxi). The exchange of speeches which follows requires seven cantos. The envoy naturally returns without having accomplished anything save a prodigious amount of bad rhetoric; the forces of Śiva take four cantos to be made ready for battle—for which their amorous sports would seem to render them dubiously fitted. They prove somewhat mediocre warriors, but after Canto xlvii has been

[14] G. Bühler, *Report of a Tour in Search of Sanskrit MSS in Kaśmīr, Rajputana, and Central India* (Bombay, 1877), p. 45.

> variegated by the insertion of a hymn to the dread goddess Caṇḍī, the poem is allowed to close at Canto 1 with the death of the miscreant.[15]

My first three chapters deal with *mahākāvya* in general. I sketch the history of the court epic in the first chapter, and discuss the attitude of the indigenous poetics to the genre in the second. In the third chapter I attempt the more important task of explaining the role of the *mahākāvya* in society. These chapters provide some perspective for the *Haravijaya* without our being distracted by the claims of rival works.

The *Haravijaya* is approached via a discussion of Ratnākara's own view of his poem, in Chapter Four. An initial look at the work as a whole is taken in Chapter Five, where I discuss the structure of the poem, and also the structure of canto (*sarga*) and verse. The shape of the *mahākāvya* in general is an important, indeed vital feature of the genre that seems to have been entirely unappreciated. All that is normally said under this heading is to repeat the poetician Daṇḍin's list of contents for a *mahākāvya*:

> It should contain descriptions of cities, seas, mountains, moonrise, and sunrise. A great *kāvya* should also be ornamented with accounts of merry-making in gardens, of bathing-parties, drinking bouts, and love-making. It should tell of the sorrow of separated lovers and should describe a wedding and the birth of a son. Finally, it should describe a king's council, an embassy, the marching forth of an army, a battle, and the victory of a hero.[16]

In my concern to bring the poem to life I devote three chapters to the characters or beings of the poem, who are certainly full of life in one way or another. Chapter Six deals with the *gaṇas*, Śiva's goblin followers who here take on the air of courtiers, and their speeches. Chapter Seven examines the women in the poem. In Chapter Eight Ratnākara's treatment of the gods and the goddess is considered, and iconography and religious philosophy are shown to be profoundly important within the poem. These three chapters present a close reading of large sections of the poem, with frequent comments on the general nature of *kāvya*. The formal characters in the poem move against a backcloth of symbols: these symbols, which

[15] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 134 ff.
[16] *Kāvyādarśa* 1.16 and 17, trans. Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 33.

include moon, lotus, and bee, are classified and analysed in Chapter Nine. Ratnākara's use of one figure of speech, *śleṣa*, is studied in Chapter Ten. In the final chapter I offer my overall impressions of the *Haravijaya*.

There are, inevitably, many facets of the poem which I have not examined. With regard to subject-matter, Ratnākara's treatment of battle is an important aspect scarcely touched upon; and I have said virtually nothing about metre or style. The list could be considerably extended. While this study offers only an introduction to the poem, the one omission I feel called upon to justify is my failure to discuss in any detail the influence upon Ratnākara of his predecessors.

Ratnākara, it seems likely, set out to surpass the most influential of Sanskrit *mahākāvyas*, Māgha's *Śiśupālavadha*, a work dedicated to Viṣṇu, and itself modelled on Bhāravi's Śaivite *Kirātārjunīya*.[17] Ratnākara, adopting the structure of the court epic established by Bhāravi and Māgha, makes use of the theme of Śiva's victory over the demon Andhaka, aspiring to regain for Śiva the honour of being the subject of the latest and largest court epic. However, in a number of ways Ratnākara's work differs considerably from those of Māgha and Bhāravi, and indeed all preceding *mahākāvyas*. It is significant that it is the prose poet Bāṇa who Ratnākara proclaims as his model: both have an imagination which seeks to be all-inclusive. Entirely original is the way in which Ratnākara introduces a new philosophical level into *kāvya* in his sixth *sarga*, a new level of devotionalism in his forty-seventh; and generally gives far more emphasis to mythology. Much of the poem is cast in the traditional mould, but the spirit is different from that of earlier *mahākāvyas*.

Ratnākara's originality, however, was impugned in a short article written by Jacobi in 1890 primarily to prove that Māgha did not live in the tenth century; in this article Jacobi shows in the *Haravijaya* 'unmistakable borrowings from Māgha'.[18]

[17] Bhāravi belongs to the sixth century, and Māgha to the seventh. For Māgha's relationship to Bhāravi, see Hermann Jacobi, 'On Bhāravi and Māgha', *W.Z.K.M.*, Vol. 3, 1889, pp. 121–45. Jacobi remarks, 'the *Kirātārjunīya* and *Śiśupālavadha*, since more than a thousand years, have been declared by the unanimous verdict of the Hindus to rank among the very best works of Sanskrit literature.' Ibid., p. 121.

[18] Hermann Jacobi, 'Ānandavardhana and the date of Māgha', ibid., Vol. 4, 1890, pp. 236–44; p. 240.

Thereafter, Keith speaks of Māgha's 'great influence' on Ratnākara;[19] Winternitz says that Māgha 'has been most zealously imitated' by Ratnākara;[20] and similarly other writers who touch on Ratnākara.

After presenting eight parallel verses, Jacobi concludes,

> On considering the verses of Ratnākara, confronted by me with those of Māgha, nobody will fail to see that the former bear the characteristic marks of imitations. But students familiar with classical Sanskrit poetry will scarcely need such proofs. For the perusal of a few cantos of the *Haravijaya* will convince them that Ratnākara's muse belongs to a later phase in the development of classical Sanskrit poetry than that of Māgha. Māgha belongs to the Golden age of classical Sanskrit literature, Ratnākara to the Silver age. It is evident from the facts brought forward that already in Ratnākara's time the study of Māgha's classical poem formed an indispensable part of the training through which every aspirant to the fame of a *Kavi* had to pass, just as was the case in much later times.[21]

A year earlier, Jacobi had found similar connections between Māgha and his predecessor Bhāravi. To that case, however, Jacobi's attitude was different, for he introduces the list of parallels in the following terms:

> If we consider the limited range of ideas which furnish the materials for *Kāvyas*, we should expect to meet the same conceit over and over again in different works; and I do not doubt that most readers of Sanskrit poetry are under this impression. But if one reads the works of great poets with the intention of detecting borrowed ideas or stolen conceits, one is astonished at the very small number of actual borrowings.
>
> The reason why the poets avoided reproducing the ideas of their predecessors, is the same in India as elsewhere. For every candidate for fame has to force his way through a crowd of rivals, an Indian poet perhaps more than a common Paṇḍit. If he borrowed his conceits from well known authors, he was sure to be denounced as a plagiary.
>
> For little Envy is always barking at Success, or as Maṅkha puts

[19] Ibid., p 134.

[20] M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. III, Part I: *Classical Sanskrit Literature*, trans. with additions, by Subhadrā Jhā (New Delhi, 1963), p. 76.

[21] Ibid., pp. 243 ff.

> it, 'those dogs of obtrectators at least are good for one thing: they bark at the pilferers of poems who enter the poetical storehouse of others only in order to steal.'[22]
>
> Nevertheless even the greatest poets were occasionally forced to take over thoughts from other writers. But if they did so, they always modified them, improving or expanding them, so that such borrowings were not exposed to the charge of plagiarism.[23]

This leaves out of account the important element, well known to the audience, of surpassing, outdoing earlier versions of a conceit consciously and ostentatiously. Jacobi proceeds to discuss some nine parallel verses of Bhāravi and Māgha, and lists another forty-nine. Surely the great poet Māgha (their works, Jacobi says, 'are equally excellent'[24]) was not only forced to take over thoughts from Bhāravi, but deliberately chose to do so. More generally, with due deference to Jacobi's wide reading in *kāvya*, it is difficult to agree that the number of 'actual borrowings' in the works of the great poets is 'very small', especially since so many works have been lost.

To deliberate as to whether Ratnākara's imitation of Māgha is more pronounced than Māgha's imitation of Bhāravi would be to compound the problem I am determined to avoid. Nevertheless, in defence of Ratnākara's reputation I shall look at those parallels between Māgha and Ratnākara where Jacobi remarks on Ratnākara's inferiority, examining the first instance in depth:

> (Māgha): 'The girls' beautifully raised (proud) fingers, approaching the twigs of the trees, vanquished them by their superior beauty and (then) violently broke (crushed) them.'[25]
>
> (Ratnākara): 'The girls' red fingers possessing superiority,

[22] *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* 2.22:

ekaḥ punar durjanasārameyair dhṛto guṇo'yaṃ parasūktikoṣam/
vivikṣatāṃ luṇṭhayituṃ bhaṣanti yad agrataḥ kāvyamalimlucānām/ /

Jacobi employs an obsolete word, 'obtrectator' (calumniator) to translate the straightforward Sanskrit word *durjana*, 'scoundrel'.

[23] Jacobi, 'On Bhāravi and Māgha', pp. 126 ff.

[24] Ibid., p. 124.

[25] *Śiśupālavadha* 7.29:

abhimukhapatitair *guṇaprakarṣād* avajitam uddhatim *ujjvalaṃ dadhānaiḥ*/
*tarukisalaya*jālam *agrahastaiḥ prasabham anīyata bhaṅgam aṅganānām*/ /

(Jacobi underlines 'like words and phrases' in the parallel verses.)

violently broke the twigs a second time, for they were already broken (vanquished) by the fingers' very excellent beauty.'[26]

In Māgha's verse the second meaning is delicately expressed, while Ratnākara by attempting a broad pun destroys what charms the original conceit possesses.[27]

We can see plainly how the raw material for Ratnākara's verse is not merely a visualization of young women plucking flowers in a wood, nor merely Māgha's verse on that subject, but rather both the original event and its reflection in Māgha's verse: *kāvya* is a succession of mirror images. When Ratnākara uses the word *punarukta* ('tautological')[28], he is aware that it applies also to his verse's relationship to Māgha's.

Māgha's verse is powerfully expressed, and sees political parallels to the women's action, hinting at the battle to come. The expression *uddhatiṃ ujjvalāṃ* is peculiar. Jacobi concedes his translations are 'sometimes but paraphrases of the text',[29] but even so his rendering here, 'beautifully', should be replaced by 'splendidly'. Nor is there mention of beauty in *guṇaprakarṣād*— 'by their superior quality'. Māgha's metaphor is military, Ratnākara's linguistic or literary. The fingers of Māgha's girls do not approach the trees—they 'confront' them (*abhikrama*). The forcefulness attributed by Māgha to the women is made plain by reference to a later verse in his poem where, in a comparison of the might of Śiśupāla to a flood carrying all before it—'his rise unstoppable, he quickly and violently breaks those who stand up to him',[30] we meet again the same key words, *uddhati, prasabham,* and *bhaṅga*.

[26] *Haravijaya* 17.52 (hereafter all Sanskrit verses cited without reference to the title of the work are from *Haravijaya*):

bibhrāṇair adhikaguṇatvam aṅganānāṃ hastāgraiḥ prasabham akāriānām/
pratyagrojjvalanijaśobhayā sarāgair bhagnānām api punarukta eva bhaṅgaḥ//

[27] Jacobi, 'Ānandavardhana', pp. 240 ff.

[28] My own translation is as follows (and see below, pp. 195 ff.):

When the women's reddened fingertips,
superior to the blossoms,
violently plucked them,
it was tautology,
for they were ‹conquered›/‹plucked›
by the fingers' fresh shining beauty.

[29] Ibid.

[30] *Śiśupālavadha* 16.72:

nayati drutam uddhatiśritaḥ prasabhaṃ bhaṅgam abhaṅgurodayaḥ/....

Ratnākara's pun is no 'broader' than Māgha's—it is the same pun on *bhagna* as meaning both 'broken' and 'defeated'. The pun is more emphatically expressed by Ratnākara, for its full force is withheld until the final word of the verse, and the events of the verse take place simultaneously rather than sequentially as in Māgha's. Note the fine assonance of this last *pada* (quarter-verse) of Ratnākara's, the *p* and *k* of *punarukta* mediating between the *bh* and *g* of the first and last words, *bhagnānām* and *bhaṅgaḥ*. Ratnākara makes the logic of the situation much clearer by referring to the beauty of the women's freshly-painted hands, fresher and brighter than the flowers of the trees. Māgha's genius is sterner than Ratnākara's—but neither of the verses is outstandingly good.

I must point out the tendentious nature of Jacobi's comments on Ratnākara's verses. For instance, when Ratnākara says that a girl thinks her ear adorned with a golden earring less ornamented than the other graced by a leaf from her lover's hand before the eyes of her rival (17.68), Jacobi asks, 'Has it ever been the custom for Hindu girls to wear an earring only in one ear? Or has Ratnākara been led to this untrue and unnatural description by his intention to vary Māgha's conceit.'[31] Women are occasionally shown in painting and in sculpture to have a large ring inserted within the lobe of only one ear; alternatively, it is a commonplace in poetry that women's jewelry falls off during copulation—in reality it is liable to do so during any form of exertion, as for instance reaching up to pluck flowers. Thus Ratnākara's description in this respect is neither untrue nor unnatural.

Again, when comparing verses on the crushing of the two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha by Viṣṇu in his sleep (where, there is little or no trace of imitation in Ratnākara's verse), Jacobi observes, 'Māgha's simile is quaint, yet not unpleasant; the imitation becomes repulsive by the working out of the details.'[32] The details are that the two demon-bugs are deeply immersed in a quagmire of blood—an accurate description of bug-crushing, effectively contrasting with Viṣṇu himself floating on the cosmic waters. But the contexts are so different that discussion of the verses in isolation has little or no meaning.

Obviously there is great value in a comprehensive comparison

[31] Ibid., p. 242. [32] Ibid., p. 243.

between Māgha and Ratnākara; but such a comparison would need to be based on a good understanding of both poems. I restrict myself here to understanding one poem. There is of course a great difference between spotting borrowings, difficult and demanding though that exercise may be, and coming to a sympathetic understanding of the unity of a single work of art. As Ryder observes in the introduction to his translation of *Daśakumāracarita*,

> These dismal studies in influences and sources may be securely left in the hands of those who have no love for literature, since the result is always the same. A great author uses what fits his purpose, and in using it, so transforms it as to make it his own.[33]

Ratnākara is not at present established as a great author. But Jacobi's article is the principal determinant of Ratnākara's reputation, via Keith and the other literary historians. The *Haravijaya*, in itself, is a work of marked originality. The degree to which Ratnākara is influenced by individual verses of earlier poets will be left undetermined by the present study.

The following appreciation of Matthew Arnold as poet is certainly 'a crushing retort to all originality-mongers' in whatever literature, and merits citing at length:

> The most beautiful of all his poems, *Thyrsis* and the *Scholar Gipsy*, are, if you seek for models and influences, the least original poems ever written.
>
> Echoing in their long-rippled, cunningly suspended rhythms the peculiar accents of Milton's *Lycidas*, which itself carries as it flows murmurs and reverberations of high Virgilian music and Greek orchestration, these two enchanting poems can yet convey with a fresh and dewy realism unrivalled outside Shakespeare and Keats the magic of our English landscape.
>
> What a retort is this, what a crushing retort, to all originality-mongers!
>
> The loveliness of these spontaneous verses owes the miracle of its startling actuality to the very fact that its author is not labouring under the weight of some carefully worked-up method of 'creative insight'. Copying Milton, who copied Virgil, who copied the Greeks, these poems call up the sights and sounds and scents, the stillnesses and the expectancies of our English countryside more freshly and realistically than any others in the language.[34]

[33] Arthur W. Ryder (trans.) *The Ten Princes* (Bombay, 1956), pp. 7 ff.

[34] John Cowper Powys, *The Pleasures of Literature* (London, 1938), p. 404.

A more recent critic makes the general point that 'Poetry can only be made out of other poems ... Literature shapes itself ...':

> It is clear that any poem may be examined, not only as an imitation of nature, but as an imitation of other poems ...
>
> All art is equally conventionalized, but we do not ordinarily notice this fact unless we are unaccustomed to the convention. In our day the conventional element in literature is elaborately disguised by a law of copyright pretending that every work of art is an invention distinctive enough to be patented. Hence the conventionalizing forces of modern literature ... often go unrecognized ... This state of things makes it difficult to appraise a literature which includes Chaucer, much of whose poetry is translated or paraphrased from others; Shakespeare, whose plays sometimes follow their sources almost verbatim; and Milton, who asked for nothing better than to steal as much as possible out of the Bible.[35]

A last word on this topic, and one which will lead us on to the proper study of the *Haravijaya* in Chapter Four:

> Nothing comes of nothing; and though there is absolutely no more useless style of criticism than that which would fain make out that somebody copied somebody else, there is none more sage and fruitful than that which endeavours to find out what somebody had in his mind, consciously or unconsciously, when he wrote something.[36]

[35] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 96 ff.

[36] George Saintsbury, 'Introduction' to Thomas Peacock's *Maid Marion* and *Crotchet Castle* (reprint London, 1955), p. ix.

CHAPTER 1

The Indian Court Epic to the Ninth Century

The court epic, *mahākāvya*, is the most prestigious of the varied manifestations of the composition in ornate style which is called *kāvya*. *Kāvya* first appeared after the two original epics;[1] it seems the inevitable manner for the language which proudly calls itself Sanskrit, 'elaborated, refined, cultured, civilised'.[2]

Mahākāvya takes its plots from the epics and the pseudo-epics (Purāṇas), from what has been engagingly called the first flush of the culture's vigour;[3] however, the virtuosity of its style in some ways looks back beyond the epics, to the oldest Sanskrit poetry, to the Vedas. The Vedas belonged to the end of an earlier epoch, and were increasingly venerated the less they were understood, like a dwarf star ceasing to emit light whilst its gravity rapidly increases. But there are important resemblances with *kāvya*, which I consider in Chapter three. For the moment, we may note that the Vedic hymns were eulogies of the gods, recalling without describing their mythical exploits, and often at the same time including praise of the poet's patron, asking for him, as for the poet, favours and benefits. Sanskrit poetry admitted no foreign influences. The tradition seeks to be homogeneous. Above all, there is a strong bond with the original, the primary epics. There could be nothing like the English poet Cowley's dismissive references to 'the cold-meats of the Ancients', to 'the threadbare tales of Thebes and Troy.'[4]

Both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* are concerned with abiding problems for kings: palace intrigue, determining the heir to the throne, and being a good ruler. The *Mahāhhārata*,

[1] The long oral traditions underlying the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* began to take on their present form *c.* 300 B.C.

[2] Cf. Richard Gombrich's Oxford inaugural lecture, *On being Sanskritic* (Oxford, 1978).

[3] See Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Boston, 1965), p. 316: 'As the epic mode of thought ... is most typical of a culture in the first flush of its vigour, the major epic tends to come rather early in the nation's history and hence may form, if it is great enough, a sort of matrix for the whole cultural development that follows it.'

[4] Abraham Cowley, Preface to *Poems*, 1656.

despite all its mythology, is a profoundly realistic work for the modern reader in its pessimism, in the failure of the righteous Yudhiṣṭhira to reign satisfactorily. Although the *Rāmāyaṇa*, 'the first *kāvya*', is considered the elder epic by Indian tradition, it is in fact well on the way to being a court epic, and this not only on account of its more polished style. *Rāmarājya*, Rāma's royal rule, is the perfect political state, in the view of all succeeding ages—because Vālmīki, the first poet, set out to make it so! Rāma, quite literally a 'Prince Charming', is absolutely obedient to his father's whims; his wife Sītā a model of faithfulness; his younger brother Lakṣmaṇa an ideal younger brother; his helper Hanuman a model servant. As Warder remarks, Vālmīki 'stood very far from an original Rāma story'.[5] This shaping, this loss of heroic ruggedness, no doubt explains why subsequent poets often retell the whole *Rāmāyaṇa* but select only single episodes of the *Mahābhārata*. The longer epic could just as easily be reduced to small compass, but its grimmer face, its less tractable presentation of life, would have posed far greater problems for the court poet than did the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Mention must also be made of the work which forms an appendix to the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṃśa*, 'The Lineage of Kṛṣṇa'. Within later additions is to be found an epic poem, somewhat later in date than the *Rāmāyaṇa* but more primitive in manner. It stems from the world of nomadic cattle herders, and the poet's hatred of cities 'where you have to buy your wood and vegetables'[6] is at a far remove from the court tradition which nurtured the *mahākāvya*.

The subsequent development of the epic form in India is set out in the conspectus (Table 1). The list is not fully inclusive, but includes all extant *mahākāvyas* up to the time of Ratnākara.

A striking feature here is the uncertain dating of the majority of poets. This uncertainty is general.[7] No less striking is the relative exactitude in date enjoyed by the Kashmiri poets mentioned by Kalhaṇa. Kashmir, thanks to Kalhaṇa, has a

[5] A. K. Warder, *Indian Kāvya Literature* (Delhi, 1974), Vol. p. 79.

[6] Verse 3490, trans. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, 'The *Harivaṃśa* as a *Mahākāvya*', *Mélanges d'Indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou* (Paris, 1968), pp. 381–4, p. 386.

[7] 'It is one of the misfortunes of Indian literature that, prior to the tenth century or thereabouts, very few literary works can be dated with certainty.' John Brough, *Poems from the Sanskrit* (Penguin, 1968), p. 13.

TABLE 1
Conspectus of the Indian Court Epic to the Ninth Century and Beyond

Antecedents		
c. 1500–1200 BC		Vedic Hymns
c. 500 BC codification of oral tradition begins		*Mahābhārata* *Rāmāyaṇa* *Harivaṃśa*
c. 200 AD?	Aśvaghoṣa	*Buddhacarita* (Acts of the Buddha) *Saundarananda* (Handsome Nanda)
c. 340?	Sarvasena	Lost *Harivijaya* (Hari's Victory) written in Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit
c. 400?	Bhartṛmeṇṭha	Lost *Hayagrīvavadha* (The Slaying of Hayagrīva)
before Kālidāsa?		
c. 420–50?	Pravarasena	*Setubandha* (*Rāvaṇavadha*) (The Construction of the Causeway) written in Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit
c. 450?	Kālidāsa	*Raghuvaṃśa* (The Dynasty of Raghu) *Kumārasaṃbhava* (The Birth of Kumāra)
c. 500? present texts established with elements of *kāvya* style included		*Mahābhārata* *Rāmāyaṇa* *Harivamśa*
c. 530–50?	Bhāravi	*Kirātārjunīya* (Arjuna and the Mountaineer)
c. 600?	Kumāradāsa	*Jānakīharaṇa* (The Abduction of Sītā)
c. 650?	Bāṇa	*Harṣacarita* (The Deeds of Harṣa) prose *kāvya*
c. 700?	Māgha	*Śiśupālavadha* (The Slaying of Śiśupāla)
c. 760?	Yaśovarman	*Gauḍavaho* (The Slaying of the King of Bengal) wirtten in Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit
epic written 826–838	Ratnākara	*Haravijaya* (Śiva's Victory)
Kashmiri poets mentioned by Kalhaṇa		
851	Śaṅkuka	Lost *Bhuvanābhyudaya* (Triumph of the World) (?)
c. 855–82	Ānandavardhana	Lost *Arjunacarita* (Arjuna's Exploits)
c. 855–82	Śivasvāmin	*Kapphiṇābhyudaya* (Kapphiṇa's Triumph)
epic begun 1148	Kalhaṇa	*Rājataraṅgiṇī* (The River of Kings)
c. 1150?	Śrīharṣa	*Naiṣadhacarita* (The Adventures of Nala)

history. Otherwise, only the times of Bāṇa and Yaśovarman are tolerably certain.

From the eleventh century onwards, many *mahākāvyas* survive which, like the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa and the *Gauḍavaho* of Yaśovarman, describe and laud the career of the poet's monarch.

But most early *mahākāvyas* deal with myth and legend without reference to the time of the writer. Hindu India was a collection of independent and warring kingdoms where successive dynasties had no wish to preserve eulogies of their rivals and predecessors, or rivals. There can be little doubt that historical *mahākāvyas* were composed from the earliest days of the formation of the *kāvya* style; but only the more recent productions, from the eleventh century, have survived.

The general character of the *mahākāvya* is brought out by contrasting it with Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, even though Kalhaṇa sought to write a *mahākāvya* and occasionally produces typical passages. When, in 1148, Kalhaṇa began his chronicle of Kashmir, 'The River of Kings', covering the history of his country from the earliest legends up to his own day, he likened himself to a judge in keeping free from love or hatred in recording the past. For the most part, Kalhaṇa is concerned with truth and fact, with drainage systems, with precise dates, and with the complications and confusion of politics.

The majority of *mahākāvyas* are ostensibly entirely literary in inspiration, but the basic pattern is set by the historical *mahākāvyc* which explicitly boosts the poet's sovereign. A look at the two surviving historical poems which preceded Ratnākara, will be instructive. Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*, 'The Deeds of Harṣa', is technically not a court epic since it is written in prose, and prose, though it can be as here, *kạvya*, is not allowed the title *mahākāvya*. However, the *Harṣacarita* is an excellent prose poem and in substance is very much a court epic. In addition to the instrinsic merit of his *Harṣacarita* (and also of his prose romance, *Kādambarī*), Bāṇa is of great interest to us because Ratnākara claims to be a second Bāṇa, and mentions no other predecessor. The truth of this claim is not immediately obvious, but I explain Ratnākara's meaning in Chapter Four, 'Ratnākara's View of the *Haravijaya*', having discussed Bāṇa at length in Chapter Three, 'Kings,. Courts, and Poets'.

Bāṇa lived in the first half of the seventh century—so we deduce from the dates of his patron Harṣa, who was the most powerful king in north India at the time.

In the following summary the eventful story line inevitably stands out. The action is described in short brisk sentences, but these are sandwiched between massive set descriptions rich in

puns and paradoxes, and the bulk of the work is no less leisurely and figurative in style than a *mahākāvya*.

The first three chapters of the *Harṣacarita* are autobiographical. The work begins with a mythological account of Bāṇa's lineage, set in heaven, and the first chapter ends with a summary of his bohemian youth. After returning home, he is summoned by the emperor Harṣa to give an account of himself. He treats his readers to a panegyric of the emperor. He is eventually favoured by the emperor (Chapter 2). Bāṇa is requested by his kinsmen to tell the deeds of Harṣa. He begins by relating how Harṣa's ancestor, Puṣpabhūti, founded the dynasty by participation in a gruesome magic rite (Chapter 3). Harṣa's father is described and the birth of his children, Harṣa being the second son. The two princes grow to manhood (Chapter 4). While the elder brother, Rājyavardhana, is away fighting the Hūṇas in the north and Harṣa is on a hunting expedition, their father is taken ill. Harṣa returns to see his father die. His mother ascends the funeral pyre before the king's death (Chapter 5). On his return Rājyavardhana is griefstricken and decides to renounce the kingdom in his brother's favour and retire to the forest. Harṣa says he too will retire to the forest, but at that very moment a messenger arrives with the news that their brother-in-law has been murdered and their sister imprisoned. The brothers are transported with fury. Leaving Harṣa to look after the kingdom, Rājyavardhana instantly leads an attack against the miscreant, the king of Mālava, only to be treacherously murdered by the king of the Gauḍas after defeating Mālava. Harṣa, once again transported with fury, vows to extirpate the Gauḍa king. He is given military advice (Chapter 6), and sets out with his army. A wonderful parasol, symbol of royal fame and fortune, is presented to him by a king who seeks alliance. He hears that his sister, Rājyaśrī, has escaped from captivity, and finding some traces of her enters the Vindhya forest (Chapter 7). Harṣa searches the forest. He meets a Buddhist monk surrounded by followers and other scholars, who have heard nothing of her. At that moment a monk brings news that a young lady is about to burn herself to death. All hasten to the spot to find and rescue Rājyaśrī. It is resolved that brother and sister will both don the Buddhist red robe when Harṣa has avenged his brother. Here the *Harṣacarita* ends, with a description of a sunset suggesting bloody wars and a moonrise suggesting the rise of Harṣa's glory.

There is no reason to think this lurid sequence of events exceptional but it is only here that they find relatively free expression. Bāṇa is freed not only from the constraint of metre, but above all from the constraint of the standard *mahākāvya* form.

The other historical poem to be considered here presents an extreme contrast. The city of Kanauj was raised to the position of an imperial capital by Bāṇa's Harṣavardhana. A century later we find a powerful monarch named Yaśovarman occupying its throne, though his court poet, Vākpati, gives a more than usually hazy account of his patron in his Mahārāṣṭrī *mahākāvya* the *Gauḍavaho*, 'The slaying of the [king of] Gauḍa'. Sixty-one verses of various invocations are followed by sixty-three verses on poetry and poets in general. When the poet starts to extol his king, he soon digresses into the legend of Indra's cutting off the wings of the mountains in the good old days when they could fly; when the king sets out on campaign, Vākpati is again reminded of Indra's valour, and devotes another forty-two verses to the cutting off of the mountains' wings, four verses less than previously! Battle is admirably prepared for by the king's hymn to Kālī as he passes through the Vindhyas; and he concludes with a thoughtful address on death, to a skeleton. But in the twelve thousand and nine verses of this poem, we hear about the king of the Gauḍas in only three or four. The enemy's allies are described at greater length. The poem ends with the poet saying that after this great beginning he will relate the slaying of the king of Gauḍa in full.

This enigmatic work suggests the difficulties of writing about a living subject. Too eager, the poet might have written his poem before receiving details of the battle, if not before the battle. In this case, it may be that the patron, dissatisfied, told the poet to do the job properly; but the death of a monarch must often have frustrated his hard-working poet.

Ratnākara's *Haravijaya* may be conveniently set beside these two historical poems. Uniquely among early *mahākāvya*, the *Haravijaya* can be set within a political situation, thanks to Kalhaṇa. Our understanding not only of the poem but of *mahākāvya* in general will benefit from a sketch of the historical background to Ratnākara's masterpiece.

Some fifty years before Ratnākara's birth, Kashmir was a great power under Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa. Early in his career this king overthrew Vākpati's Yaśovarman and, says Kalhaṇa,

reduced the monarch to the condition of being his bard.[8] That was only the beginning. According to Goetz' reading of Kalhaṇa, 'the empire was rapidly expanded over the whole of India and Eastern Turkistan.'[9] For Goetz, Lalitāditya's career was 'Napoleonic':[10]

> his conquests comprised the richest and most cultured parts of India... And he had artists at his disposal from China and Rome, as well as from Kanauj, Bengal and the Deccan.[11]
>
> * * *
>
> ...enormous artistic activity was made possible by the immense booty which Lalitāditya brought home from his distant campaigns. Golden and silver idols, gigantic copper statues, jewelry, treasures of every type were simply showered over the many religious foundations; and they can have been merely the outstanding gems in an unheard-of display of luxury.[12]

After Lalitāditya's untimely end in an expedition to 'the limitless northern region'[13] a succession of brief and feeble reigns precedes the long and powerful one (*c.* 776–*c.* 807) of Jayāpīḍa,[14] a grandson of Lalitāditya. As we shall see, it is during this king's rule that Ratnākara must have been born.

Whereas Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa in his success exemplified the Hindu ideal of kingship, Jayāpīḍa was typical of the reality. He studied dramaturgy and grammar, searching widely for scholars, emptying other kingdoms of learned men. His ministers were poets and poeticians. The daily allowance of the president of his assembly, the poetician Udbhaṭa, amounted to some forty tons of grain a day![15] The king himself was a poet.

[8] *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 4. 144.

[9] Hermann Goetz, 'The Mediaeval Sculpture of Kashmir', *Marg*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, 1955, pp. 65–77, p. 65.

[10] Idem., 'The Beginnings of Mediaeval Art in Kashmir', *Journal of the University of Bombay*, n.s. 21, pt. 2 [Arts No. 27], pp. 63–106, pp. 72 and 94.

[11] Idem., 'Medieval Sculpture of Kashmir', p. 67.

[12] Idem., 'Beginnings of Medieval Art in Kashmir', p. 73.

[13] *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 4.357, trans. M. A. Stein, *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī*, 2 Vols., (Westminster, 1900). All quotations from the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* are given in Stein's translation.

[14] Kalhaṇa vividly portrays this king's history, *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 4.402–659.

[15] See *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 4.495 and Stein's note on weights and measures, *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Vol. 2, p. 327.

At the same time, Jayāpīḍa was a bold and resourceful man of action. Unfortunately, his attempts at world conquest failed, and the day came when his officials persuaded him to give up the hardships of campaigning and get riches from his own kingdom. Overcome with greed he took the whole harvest for three years running, leaving nothing for the cultivators. Finally, persecution of the Brahmans, killing them, says Kalhaṇa, at the rate of a hundred a day, led to a Brahman's curse and a very painful death. His son, a Lalitāditya in name only, was utterly licentious, shades of Agnivarṇa in the *Raghuvaṃśa*. Carrying off the beautiful daughter of a village distiller, the king begot upon her the son who seven years after his death succeeded to the throne.[16] Kalhaṇa disposes of the intervening reign in two verses.

> Then the illustrious Cippaṭajayāpīḍa, also called Bṛhaspati, the child-son of Lalitāpīḍa, became king.[17]

The colophon to each *sarga* of the *Haravijaya* declares 'the noble lord (*rājānaka*) Ratnākara' to be 'the servant of the illustrious young Bṛhaspati' (*śrībālabṛhaspatyanujīvino*). No other Kashmiri king is called Bṛhaspati, and Kalhaṇa says that Ratnākara gained fame under Avantivarman, some seventeen years later. Cippaṭa's maternal uncles, who despite their humble origins were acting as regents, killed their nephew 'by witchcraft' when he 'emerged from childhood.'[18] His intelligence and learning, we must presume, gained this ill-fated boy the title of 'Bṛhaspati', the god of wisdom and eloquence; and it must be on these grounds that Kalhaṇa (and Ratnākara) accord him the prefix '*srī*', 'illustrious', an epiphet Kalhaṇa employs with discretion.

To the *Haravijaya* are appended seven verses in the nature of a personal statement addressed by the poet to a nameless king. The last verse seems plainly to be directed at the young Cippata:

> Listen to the promise of the *mahākavi* of the *Haravijaya*!
> If he delights in my poem,
> one who as a child is not a poet will,
> by its virtue, become a poet,
> and the poet will in due course become a great poet.[19]

[16] *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 4.678. [17] Ibid., 4.676. [18] Ibid., 4.686.

[19] The concluding verse of the Praśasti ([Self-] glorification) appended to the *Haravijaya*:

This has the ring of a tutor exhorting his pupil. Was it to Ratnākara that the young king owed his fame as a Bṛhaspati?

It is impossible to discern any direct influence of the political situation on the *Haravijaya*. However, the attack by Śiva on the demon Andhaka who has conquered all the world save Śiva's mountain fastness (Mount Mandara), an attack preceded by an embassy to that demon, might represent happenings of the time. Or perhaps Ratnākara looks back to the days of Jayāpīḍa or Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa to prompt his young master to similar deeds of glory: Śiva is reproved by one of his *gaṇas* for inaction.[20] One can only guess. But it seems more than likely that there are connections between the general form of *mahākāvyas* and the endemically unstable condition of Hindu India; in Chapter Three I attempt to discover those connections.

Cippaṭa was on the throne from 826 to 838.[21] The *Haravijaya* must have been written during that period. Ratnākara also wrote a collection of fifty verses of punning conversation between Śiva and Pārvatī, *Vakroktipañcāśikā*,[22] and possibly a brief commentary on the Prakrit verses accompanying a work on poetics, the Dhvani-kārikās, entitled *Dhvanigāthāpañjikā*.[23] Nothing is known about the chronology of the former; the latter, if it is by the *mahākavi*, must be a very early work, since with extreme modesty he speaks of himself as 'a certain Ratnākara' (*kaś cid Ratnākara*).

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haravijayamahākaveḥ pratijñāṃ śṛṇuta kṛtapraṇayo mama prabandhe/
api śiśur akaviḥ kaviḥ prabhāvād bhavati kaviś ca mahākaviḥ krameṇa//

This verse is further discussed, p. 106.

[20] 15.34 and 51. See below, pp. 162 ff. and 300 ff.

[21] Both Bühler and Stein found fault with Kalhaṇa's dates for Cippaṭa-Jayāpīḍa (viz. 801–13/4) on the grounds principally that the interval between Cippaṭa and Avantivarman was too great for Ratnākara to have flourished under both kings. Pointing out that Kalhaṇa's dates for an earlier member of the Kārkoṭa dynasty, Candrapīḍa, do not accord with references to that king in the Annals of the T'ang dynasty, and that on the basis of the Chinese evidence approximately twenty-five years should be added to Kalhaṇa's computation, Bühler, followed by Stein, suggested that the dates of all the subsequent Kārkoṭa kings should be similarly adjusted by twenty-five years. See Bühler, ***Report of a Tour***, p. 43; Stein, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 96.

[22] For further details of this work, see below, pp. 293 ff.

[23] See J. L. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, 'Dhvanigāthāpañjikā', ***Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute***, Vol. LV, pp. 219–25, 1974.

After they had disposed of their nephew the five brothers vied with each other to put up nominal rulers. For many years they 'feasted in mutual jealousy on the masterless kingdom, like wolves on a dead buffalo in the desert.'[24] But a few verses later Kalhaṇa lists the towns, temples, and other religious establishments that the brothers built—all men were pleased by their liberality. In 850–1 there was a fierce battle between the two most powerful brothers, during which the Vitastā river was blocked by the bodies of the dead. About this battle a poet called Śaṅkuka, 'a moon to the oceanic hearts of the wise', wrote a poem called the *Bhuvanābhyudaya*, 'Triumph of the World'.[25] Unfortunately this poem, which was surely a *mahākāvya*, has been lost; but there can be no doubt that its fate was the common one of works whose interest was local and particular. An anthology preserves what may well have been the words of one of the protagonists in the *Bhuvanābhyudaya*, of one of the men who were such a potent force in Ratnākara's day:

> A body without life just looks like a block of wood;
> so too, I have to say, is life itself
> when lacking surpassing glory.[26]

In 855–6 Avantivarman, 'full of judgement and wisdom',[27] took the throne and a new and successful dynasty began. Leaving aside the other merits of this king's rule, we learn from Kalhaṇa that scholars were granted great fortunes and honours, and rode in litters worthy of kings. Śivasvāmin,[28] Ānandavardhana, and Ratnākara won fame.

The overriding concern of the court epic is to proclaim the triumph of the hero and the defeat of the foe. The titles of most of the works listed in the conspectus confirm this. The victory of Kṛṣṇa and Śiva respectively in the *Harivijaya* and the *Haravijaya*;

[24] *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 4.694. [25] Ibid., 4.705 or 'Bhuvana's Triumph'?

[26] *Subhāṣitāvali* 526:

yathā śarīraṃ kila jīvitena vinākṛtaṃ kāṣṭham ivāvabhāti/
tatheva taj jīvitam apy avaimi lokottareṇa sphuritena śūnyam//

[27] *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 5.5. For his reign, see *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 4.715–5.126.

[28] Śivasvāmin has left us a *mahākāvya* called *Kapphiṇābhyudaya*, 'Kapphiṇa's Triumph.' A Buddhist legend here provides the theme: King Kapphiṇa's 'triumph' is his conversion to Buddhism. The poem is influenced by Māgha and Ratnākara in its descriptions of the round of pleasure, and of scenes in the council chamber.

'triumph' (*abhyudaya*) in the *Bhuvanābhyudaya* and *Kapphiṇābhyudaya*; and the 'slaying' (*vadha*) of the foes named in the following titles—the *Hayagrīvavadha*, *Rāvaṇavadha* (alternative title of the *Setubandha*), *Rāvaṇavadha* again (the *Bhaṭṭikāvya*), *Śiśupālavadha*, and *Gauḍavadha* (*Gauḍavaho*). I shall later demonstrate the peculiar appropriateness of this theme to the Indian scene. Let us here simply note that 'The reading of a book on the attaining of success is in itself the symbolic attainment of that success.'[29]

No less characteristic of the court epic is the love-making which prefigures the concluding battle, and is a preliminary manifestation of success. The dynamic sequence of these scenes includes descriptions of the seasons with their respective flora, and the rise and fall of the sun and moon. These greater rhythms contrast with the sudden swings of fortune; and their perpetual 'rightness' is made to underlie the swift and violent changes of political fortunes, the defeat of the foe, the victory of the hero.

The final component in the essential *mahākāvya* is also closely related to the concluding victory, namely the description of the royal status quo, of a perfect monarch (often a god) and his prosperous and cultured capital, as in the beginning of the *Haravijaya*.

All such elements are, to some extent, found in the two original epics, but the court poet concentrates on his chosen themes with a single-mindedness unknown to the oral tradition and its redactors. The concentration upon these elements is a codification, a tidying up, of *mahākāvya*'s source material.

Ratnākara makes clear the essential pattern of the *mahākāvya*, continuing a process begun by Bhāravi and Māgha. But before looking briefly at these latter two, it must be observed that Aśvaghoṣa and Kālidāsa, though earlier and more 'natural' poets, seem to have in mind something very like the essential pattern of the *mahākāvya*, as it eventually emerged, but consciously deviate from it. Part of the answer here is lost with the *mahākāvyas* that have disappeared without trace, but it is important to give Ratnākara and his two immediate predecessors credit for rendering clearly what was probably inchoate and obscured within the tradition.

[29] Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, revised ed. (New York, 1957), p. 258.

Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*, the oldest surviving *mahākāvya*, is an anti-court epic, for much of it concerns the Buddha's voluntary renunciation of court life. Aśvaghoṣa's second and maturer *mahākāvya* is the *Saundarananda*; 'Handsome Nanda' is the story of the Buddha's conversion of his pleasure-loving half-brother.

Writing as a Buddhist does not prevent Aśvaghoṣa from being strongly influenced by the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and he thus likens Buddha quitting his home to Rāma leaving for the forest. In the first *sarga* of the *Buddhacarita* he acknowledges Vālmīki as the first poet, and similarly in *Saundarananda* he calls his predecessor 'inspired' (*dhīmān*). As Johnston points out, the form of the poems, despite their very different subject-matter, resembles that of later *mahākāvyas*, in that Buddha battles with and defeats Māra in the penultimate *sarga* of the incomplete Sanskrit text of the *Buddhacarita*; and in the penultimate *sarga* of the *Saundarananda* Nanda's attainment of *arhat*ship is spoken of as a successful combat, with him likened to a king on campaign, battling against his foes.[30] *Kāvya*'s favourite theme, the love of women, is accorded full weight, even if it is finally dismissed.

Aśvaghoṣa was neglected by subsequent poets, partly perhaps on account of his religion, and partly on account of his style. 'His intricacy and elaboration are those of the primitive, not of the sophisticated writer; not for him the subtle relations of Kālidāsa's verse or its exact harmonies of tone, still less the 'slickness' of later *kāvya*'[31]

Kālidāsa's two *mahākāvyas* are no less original in form than Aśvaghoṣa's. Unlike other *mahākāvyas* based on the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which cover either the whole epic or its latter half, Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṃśa*, 'The Dynasty of Raghu', tucks the *Rāmāyaṇa* away into its middle portion, with the twelfth *sarga* incorporating the greater part: from the banishment of Rāma to the killing of Rāvaṇa. Rāma is, of course, being set in the context of his lineage. Kālidāsa is conducting a critical review of kingship.

In the beginning, mystical generosity. The father of Raghu offers his own life to a lion in exchange for that of the divine cow he is tending. This offered sacrifice wins the childless king his heir. The aggressive Raghu fights Indra before conquering

[30] E. H. Johnston, *The Buddhacarita* (Calcutta, 1936), Vol. 2, p. lxiii.

[31] Ibid., p. xcv.

India, and replenishes his coffers by threatening the god of wealth. We then see a falling off from this high standard of kingship. The romantic Aja wins his wife, and then laments greatly at her death. Until his son reaches manhood the king gazes at pictures of his wife and dreams about her; he then fasts to death. Daśaratha, Aja's son, is no more successful. His addiction to hunting leads to the accidental killing of a young ascetic, and he is cursed to die of a broken heart at his son's fate. That son is Rāma, the principal scion of the lineage, for whom there is a happy ending. But the third and last part of the poem, which details Rāma's descendants, charts a decline analogous to that in the first part, though it is abrupt. Rāma's son and grandson are exemplary kings, and so are their descendants for the most part until the last, Agnivarṇa, who spends his strength in debauchery. He ignored his subjects save to show his foot from a palace window. The poem ends with the pregnant queen ruling unchallenged after the death of the king. If this was the intended end of the poem, it must have had contemporary relevance. There is for us a certain appropriateness in Agnivarṇa's end, so common among mahārājas and other potentates of whom we have historical accounts. The conclusion controverts the sanctimonious past; it is undoubtedly totally different from that of the *mahākāvyas* of other poets. However the dignity and courage of Agnivarṇa's queen is itself a triumph.

Kālidāsa's other *mahākāvya*, 'The Birth of Kumāra', is presumably incomplete, for the title suggests that the poem will conclude with the birth of Śiva's son Kumāra. However, if we disregard the title, the present end is entirely satisfactory—if we can so speak of Śiva and Pārvatī's one hundred and fifty years of love-making! In this poem Kālidāsa turns the traditional form on its head. The demon, Tāraka, who oppresses the gods and, says Brahmā, can only be put down by a son of Śiva, is mentioned only to be forgotten. The battle of the poem is Rāma's attempted attack on Śiva, which at once leads to his destruction from the god's fiery forehead eye. The poem culminates in love-making. There is a striking contrast between the enervating and destructive passion of Agnivarṇa and Śiva's sexual zest. Later *mahākāvyas* try to bridge this gap between the divine and human, between history and myth.

Bhāravi and Māgha each chose to work up a single episode

from the *Mahābhārata*, breaking up the episode into discrete units with a formalism that may fairly be called Mannerist. Particular innovations of Bhāravi's are the injection of a multiplicity of metres and some internal rhyming into a *sarga* devoted to the description of a mountain; and into the battle, extreme cases of alliteration and some figure verse (which can be written out as a pattern, or picture). Like Pravarasena before him, Bhāravi stamps the last verse of each *sarga* with his mark (*aṅka*): Bhāravi always includes the word *lakṣmī*, 'success, prosperity, beauty'. Māgha and many other *mahākavis* follow Bhāravi in these things. But it is Bhāravi's and Māgha's schematic manhandling of their subject-matter that is of most significance. The new and separate topic for virtually every *sarga*, and the lack of movement within each *sarga*, are Mannerism writ large.

Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya*, 'Arjuna and the Mountaineer', is based on the popular *Mahābhārata* story of how Arjuna won the boon of magic weapons from Śiva. Much of the poem is concerned with Arjuna performing asceticism in the Himālaya to win the weapons he needs; the choice of theme may well have been influenced by the prominence of asceticism in Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*.

A spy sent by the exiled Yudhiṣṭhira to discover how the kingdom fares under his wicked cousin returns and describes the excellence of Duryodhana's rule. Draupadī, the Pāṇḍava brothers' shared wife, scorns Yudhiṣṭhira's inaction, and urges attack (*sarga* 1). Bhīma seconds their wife in what he says is the path of right policy; Yudhiṣṭhira counsels patience (*sarga* 2). The sage Vyāsa announces that, in view of the foe's superior strength, Arjuna should win the means of victory through asceticism. A *yakṣa*, a semi-divine being, will lead him to the mountain where he can propitiate Indra. Draupadī reminds Arjuna of the humiliation she suffered at the hands of Duryohana's brother (*sarga* 3). En route Arjuna admires the autumnal beauty, and the *yakṣa* further describes the scene. They reach the Himālaya mountain (*sarga* 4). Himālaya is described (*sarga* 5). Arjuna climbs a peak, and makes rapid progress in asceticism. Though pleased with his son, Indra directs his nymphs to distract him (*sarga* 6). The celestial army of nymphs and their lovers proceeds to Arjuna's peak (*sarga* 7). The nymphs bathe in

Gaṅgā's waters (*sarga* 8). The sun sets, the moon rises; the women go to their lovers' abodes and drink with them. Morning comes and the couples separate (*sarga* 9). Now the nymphs go to distract Arjuna, who is lustrous with *tapas* (ascetic power). Their attempt at seduction is aided by the appearance of all the seasons, but they themselves fall in love to no avail, and return to heaven (*sarga* 10). Disguised as an old ascetic, Indra admonishes Arjuna for retaining his weapons while practising asceticism, but after Arjuna explains his case Indra reveals his true identity and tells Arjuna to direct his efforts at Śiva (*sarga* 11). Arjuna makes yet greater efforts, standing on one leg. Śiva, aware that Arjuna is about to be attacked by a demon, Mūka, in the form of a boar, goes to him in the guise of a *kirāta* or mountaineer, as do his followers (*sarga* 12). Arjuna and Śiva simultaneously shoot the boar, but Śiva's arrow then disappears into the earth. A *kirāta* sent by Śiva reproves Arjuna for claiming the kill (*sarga* 13). Arjuna replies scornfully, and battle commences (*sarga* 14). The army of *gaṇas* flees but is rallied. Śiva steps forward to do battle with Arjuna, and each showers arrows on the other (*sarga* 15). Arjuna fires magic weapons, but these have no effect on Śiva (sarga 16). After Arjuna's bow and sword are broken he throws stones and trees at the god (*sarga* 17). They wrestle. Arjuna holds Śiva's feet when the latter makes a great leap. Thus accidentally propitiated, the god reveals himself, hands over his own Raudra missile and bids Arjuna conquer the enemy.

Māgha's *Śiśupālavadha* tells how the sage Nārada descends from heaven to bid Kṛṣṇa slay the wicked king Śiśupāla who is really a demon (*sarga* 1). Kṛṣṇa is then invited to Yudhiṣṭhira's consecration, which places him in a dilemma. After contrary speeches by his two advisors, he resolves to go first to the consecration (*sarga* 2). As Kṛṣṇa sets out for Yudhiṣṭhira's capital, there are descriptions of Kṛṣṇa himself, his city, and the ocean surrounding it (*sarga* 3). He comes to the mountain Raivataka, which is described, and further described by Kṛṣṇa's charioteer (*sarga* 4). The army encamps, and the behaviour of its animals is described (*sarga* 5). All the seasons come to divert Kṛṣṇa, protector of the good (*sarga* 6). Kṛṣṇa's followers wander in the woods, picking flowers until wearied (*sarga* 7), whereupon they bathe (*sarga* 8). The sun sets, the moon rises, and the

women adorn themselves (*sarga* 9). Love-making follows drinking (*sarga* 10). Morning comes (*sarga* 11). The army moves across the Yamunā (*sarga* 12) to Indraprastha, where Kṛṣṇa is welcomed by Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers, and eagerly observed by the women of the city (*sarga* 13). The consecration takes place. Bhīma sings Kṛṣṇa's praises, and Kṛṣṇa receives the gift of honour (*sarga* 14). Śiśupāla is furious at the respect shown to Kṛṣṇa, insults him at length, and departs with his allies to prepare for battle. Lovers bid farewell to their mistresses (*sarga* 15). Śiśupāla's envoy delivers a punning speech, both laudatory and offensive, to which Kṛṣṇa's charioteer responds (*sarga* 16). The fury of Kṛṣṇa's followers is described. They arm themselves (*sarga* 17). The two armies clash (*sarga* 18). The battle continues; Kṛṣṇa takes the field (*sarga* 19). Kṛṣṇa and Śiśupāla fight. When Śiśupāla's magic arrows are ineffective, he abuses Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa dispatches him in the penultimate verse (*sarga* 20).

Beyond these outlines, our understanding of the *mahākāvya* form will be assisted by a look at the final chapter of Rudraṭa's *Kāvyālaṃkāra*. This poetician was almost certainly a Kashmiri writing shortly before Ratnākara. Unlike his predecessors Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha, who merely list the topics to be found within a *mahākāvya*, Rudraṭa gives what amounts to a generalized picture of the *mahākāvya* as known to him. His prescriptive account relates to what he calls 'invented' (*utpādya*) *mahākāvya*, as distinct from 'non-invented' or true, historical *mahākāvya*. But in fact, as with the *Harṣacarita* and *Gauḍavaho*, the latter are strongly influenced by the former.

> In the case of the invented (*utpādya*) *mahākāvya*, one should begin with the description of a beautiful city, followed by praise of the lineage of the hero who dwells there.
>
> One should depict the hero as intent on the three ends of life, as completely possessed of the three royal abilities, having every excellence, with all his subjects devoted to him, and desirous of conquest.
>
> One should describe the whole kingdom of the hero, who protects it in proper fashion, and his behaviour as king; if opportunity offers, one should describe a season such as autumn in connection with the hero.
>
> One should describe a person of high birth as the worthy foe of the hero who can thereupon set about promoting justice either on his own or a friend's behalf.

When he comes to hear of the enemy's doings from his own spy, or from an envoy sent by the foe, or from some other source, one should show the excitement of the kings in his assembly, their thoughts and speeches inflamed by anger.

When the hero has taken counsel with his ministers and decided whether or not it is feasible to punish the foe, one should have him set out to the attack or send an eloquent envoy.

When the hero is on the march, one should describe the excitement of the women in the city, the country's mountains and rivers, woods and groves, lakes, deserts, oceans, continents, even worlds;

the setting up of camp, and the various amusements of couples in those places (which is to say, groves and rivers); the setting of the sun, dusk, darkness, then the rising of the moon;

the night, and meetings therein: concerts, drinking, and love-making. As occasion offers one should resume the tale.

In the same way one should describe the foe coming in his impatience meet the hero or, as may be his lot, under siege in his city.

One should have the warriors, knowing they must fight on the morrow, drink all night, and fearing their own deaths send messages to their wives.

When they have donned their armour and arrayed their troops, the hero and the foe should fight with wondrous skill; one should have the hero after great difficulty completely triumph at the very end.[32]

Much of this account applies to the *Śiśupālavadha*; elements of the *Kirātārjunīya* are discernible; it is Rāvaṇa in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and subsequent reworkings who is besieged in his city. With regard to the beginning, 'the description of a beautiful city, followed by praise of the lineage of the hero who dwells there', only the *Haravijaya*, among the *mahākāvyas* we have looked at, in some degree fits. It is, of course, a natural beginning for a story, and Bāṇa's *Kādambarī*, for instance, so commences. It is perhaps too natural a beginning for a *mahākāvya*. In the *Kumārasaṃbhava*, Kālidāsa rings a change by substituting a mountain for a city and a heroine for a hero; Bhāravi describes instead the kingdom of the foe; and Māgha delays the description of Kṛṣṇa and his city until the third *sarga*. Ratnākara's innovation could possibly be the first application to a god of this introduction of a hero king.

[32] *Kāvyālaṃkāra* 16.7–18. My translation is based on that given by J. Noble in *The Foundations of Indian Poetry and their Historical Development* (Calcutta, 1925), pp. 148–50.

Rudraṭa says, 'One should depict the hero as intent on the three ends of life (*trivarga*)'.[33] At the beginning of his chapter he had stated that great literary works are concerned with the four ends of man. Certainly escape from the phenomenal world (*mokṣa*) cannot be combined with the usual virtues of a hero—which is Yudhiṣṭhira's tragedy in the *Mahābhārata*, as Zaehner so well explained[34]—but Rudraṭa nowhere says how the fourth end of life should be included. In fact, it usually comes in through a hymn of praise to a god. Ratnākara gives exceptionally great weight to this fourth end, which is often handled perfunctorily.

Rudraṭa goes on to say that the hero should be 'completely possessed of the three royal abilities' and 'desirous of conquest'. The royal abilities (*śakti*) are personal pre-eminence (*prabhutva*), good counsel (*mantra*), and energy (*utsāha*). But, in the nature of things, these abilities were seldom present in sufficient measure for the latter quality, being desirous of conquest, to be fulfilled. The desire for conquest, considered essential for all kings, was a factor of cardinal importance in Indian history. Every king was potentially ruler of the world, and with that end in view attacked wherever possible. In contradistinction to the implications of this aggressive tendency, which I discuss at length in the next chapter, the wars that form the climax of *mahākāvyas* are all defensive wars. (The *Gauḍavaho* is an exception here, but the battle in that poem is, to say the least, unemphatic.) In Māgha's poem, Kṛṣṇa is insulted and challenged by Śiśupāla. In the *Haravijaya*, Śiva is asked by the gods to save the world from the god who has captured it. A similar request had earlier been made of Brahmā in the *Kumārasaṃbhava*. The context of the *Kirātārjunīya* is that of preparation for the righteous war against the Kauravas; and it is Śiva's army that first attacks Arjuna.

Rudraṭa fails to explain how the conflict arises in his scheme of the *mahākāvya*. What really matters is that the hero triumphs at the very end. It is an essential feature of the standard *mahākāvya* that it culminates in total success. By contrast, the epics are messy and unclear in their conclusions, the unhappy fate of Sītā spoiling even the more polished *Rāmāyaṇa*. No Hindu would have

[33] The *trivarga* is the triad of duties pertaining to *saṃsāra*: sensual gratification (*kāma*); material success (*artha*), and religious performance (*dharma*).

[34] See R. C. Zaehner, *Concordant Discord* (Oxford, 1970), Chapter IX.

put this in words, but it is implicit in the logic of the development of the *mahākāvya*.

Formalism is also manifested by the *mahākavis'* interest in grammar. The popularity of Bhaṭṭi's *Rāvaṇavadha*, a work most dubious to modern eyes,[35] is revelatory. Even Aśvaghoṣa, whose primitive freshness Johnston praises, is for Johnston 'a writer of baffling contrasts',

> on the one hand the literary artist, as story-teller, preacher and poet, on the other hand the scholar anxious to conform with all the rules and to parade his knowledge....Take as an example the character of Śuddhodana in *Saundarananda*, ii; read in translation, we see it to be an admirable picture of an ideal king, free from gross hyperbole and attractive in details, and often reminding us of the account that Aśoka gives of himself in his edicts, but our enjoyment of the original is obstructed by its unhappy resemblance to the section of a grammar which sets out the rules for the formation of the various aorists.[36]

Even today, grammar is the most prestigious occupation in the field of Sanskrit studies. It is in some ways unfortunate that Hindu high culture is linguistically unilateral, but it is at the same time its strength. We may regret the extent to which poets looked back to the grammar of Pāṇini, but they looked backward to move forward, to innovate, to write in a new and richer manner.

[35] Bhaṭṭi wrote 'The Slaying of Rāvaṇa' around the end of the sixth century. Usually called simply Bhaṭṭi's Poem, *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, it not only retells the *Rāmāyaṇa* but at the same time illustrates the rules of grammar and exemplifies figures of speech.

[36] E. H. Johnston, *The Buddhacarita* (Calcutta, 1936), Vol. 2, p. lxxxvii.

CHAPTER 2

Poetics and the Court Epic

There is a danger that the study of Sanskrit poetry may be hindered by the stress that recent writers have put upon poetics. I refer in particular to Ingalls and Warder. Ingalls claims that for a proper understanding of Sanskrit poetry 'one must seek guidance from those versed in the tradition, from the great critics of the ninth to the thirteenth centuries.'[1] Warder has written an account of *kāvya*, *Indian Kāvya Literature*,[2] wherein the approach is based almost entirely upon the views of poeticians and commentators. Ingalls' own contributions to the understanding of *kāvya*, which are great, owe nothing to poetics; and Warder's work, though useful to the specialist, can only give a distorted view of the subject.

The relationship between Sanskrit poetry and poetics is not a happy one. Its character is expressed by the tradition that Śrīharṣa was the nephew of the great poetician Mammaṭa and that after reading through the *Naiṣadhacarita* Mammaṭa pronounced it full of faults from beginning to end. Poetry and poetics were essentially at odds with each other. Poetics was a self-perpetuating and self-absorbed learned tradition. Its practitioners took poetry as their raw material and raised up structures of definitions and categories. Art for learning's sake would have been their motto. Thus the three oldest poeticians all make up their own examples, as do many of their successors. It is rare for quoted verses to be attributed—the author and his book are of too little moment to merit mention.

Poets, for their part, studied poetics along with the other disciplines of their general education, but were, I believe, far more strongly influenced by preceding poets than by the prescriptions of poeticians. Since the works of preceding poets, even if unacknowledged, were the basis of many of the rules, it

[1] Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 52.

[2] A. K. Warder, *Indian Kāvya Literature*, Vol. 1, *Indian Literary Criticism* (Delhi, 1972); Vol. 2, *Origins and Formation of the Classical* Kāvya (Delhi, 1974); Vol. 3, *The Early Medieval Period* (Delhi, 1977). Three further volumes forthcoming.

sometimes appears that a poet is obeying rules when in fact his sole concern is to rival or surpass a predecessor. This is particularly true in the case of the *mahākāvya*, whose authors are often said to slavishly limit themselves to the poeticians' list of permitted topics. A reading of *mahākāvyas* undistracted by poetics reveals a coherent dynamism within the tradition, and also reveals the superficiality of the poetics.

In considering the history of poetics, it will not be necessary to proceed beyond Ratnākara's own day, beyond his contemporary Ānandavardhana, 'the most brilliant of all Sanskrit critics'.[3] I shall refer only briefly to Ānandavardhana's commentator, Abhinavagupta (active 980–1020), and, by the limit imposed, ignore most notably Kuntaka (active *c.* 950)[4] and Bhoja (first half of eleventh century).[5] But the varied merits of these authors would take us little further than does Ānandavardhana towards the understanding of *mahākāvya*.

Sanskrit poetics principally consists of analysis of two opposed elements: figures of speech, and aesthetic emotions. Poetics began with a presentation of figures of speech; but, preceded by the basic text of dramaturgy and allied arts, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata (*c.* A.D. 300–600), it became increasingly influenced by the stress that text laid on the emotions. The study of the emotions in poetry led to a wider consideration of the poetic process, but it is only rarely that the poeticians go beyond a myopic concentration on the single verse.

With regard to the figures of speech, we may here merely note their name—*alaṃkāra*, 'ornament'—and disregard their multiplicity.

> The word *alaṃkāra*, lit. 'ornament', from *alam* 'sufficient', 'able', and *kṛ-* 'making'. The etymology thus betrays the religious or magical function originally attributed to 'embellishment': that which gives sufficiency or power to common, unsanctified, and unadorned speech. The word however soon takes on the connotations

[3] Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 48.

[4] 'Kuntaka's work ... is more or less modelled upon the *Dhvanyāloka* [of Ānandavardhana] and supplements it by extending its insights by adducing more examples.' K. Krishnamoorthy, *The Vakrokti-Jīvita of Kuntaka* (Dharwad, 1977), p. XVI.

[5] Bhoja's encyclopaedic *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* is rich in quotations and scholasticism.

of the English 'ornament'—extrinsic decoration—and it is generally in this sense that *alaṃkāra* is applied to the poetic figures of speech.[6]

The following comment of Wimsatt on Western figures of speech concerns us equally:

> We no longer are willing to take seriously a set of terms which once—for centuries—were taken seriously, and which must, no matter how unhappy their use, have stood for something. In throwing away the terms [of rhetoric] it is even possible we have thrown away all definite concept of the things they once stood for. The realities of antithesis and climax, for example, are perhaps less and less a part of our consciousness. But literary history without these old realities and their old terms is impossible; without an evaluation of them it is superficial.[7]

In India, the Sanskrit reader takes the *alaṃkāras* as seriously as he ever did. But it is important to appreciate that the poetician in his analysis sought to delimit and define *alaṃkāras* in general. The interest of the individual work lay only in its contribution to the corpus of figures. It is possible, though difficult, to usefully develop one's understanding of a Sanskrit poet through an evaluation of his figures of speech, but the poeticians did not seriously attempt this. A study of the use of figures of speech in the *Haravijaya*, since no verse is without at least one of them, would be a big book by itself. I have devoted chapter ten to one of them and mentioned others, but I have given more space to aspects of the poem which I consider of greater critical interest.

Alaṃkāras were demoted by those poeticians most interested in aesthetic emotions, but their field of interest was quickly invaded by a parallel scholasticism. This second and contradictory aspect of Sanskrit poetics calls for a fuller explanation than do figures of speech. We must begin with the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which declared, 'Without aesthetic emotion no topic of drama can appeal to the mind of the spectator.'[8] By aesthetic emotion I refer to the emotions called forth by art. The Sanskrit word is *rasa*, which basically means 'liquid' and hence 'flavour', and stands at a remove from ordinary emotion (*bhāva*). The *Nāṭyaśāstra* explains its use of the term.

[6] Edwin Gerow, in Notes to S. K. De, *Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetics* (Bombay, 1963), p. 82.

[7] W. K. Wimsatt, *The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven, 1941), pp. 2 ff.

[8] 6.31: na hi rasād ṛte kaścid arthaḥ pravartate.

What is a good analogy? Just as flavour (*rasa*) comes from a combination of many spices, herbs and other substances, so *rasa* (in a drama) comes from the combination of many emotions (*bhāvas*). In the same way that beverages such as *ṣāḍava* (a combination of the six flavours) are created from substances such as molasses, spices and herbs, the permanent emotions attain the status of *rasa* when they are accompanied by the various subsidiary emotions. At this point someone might ask: What is it you call *rasa*? The answer is: It is called *rasa* because it can be savoured. How is *rasa* savoured? As gourmets are able to savour the flavour of food prepared with many spices, and attain pleasure etc., so sensitive spectators savour the primary emotions suggested by the acting out of the various subsidiary emotions and presented with the appropriate modulation of the voice, movements of the body and display of involuntary reactions, and attain pleasure etc. Therefore they are called dramatic flavours (*nāṭyarasas*).

As gourmets savour food
prepared with many tasty ingredients
and many spices,
So sensitive people enjoy in their minds
the permanent emotions presented
with different kinds of the acting out
of transient emotions.[9]

Eight primary emotions are listed, and beside them eight *rasas*.

In a drama there are the following eight *rasas*: erotic (*śṛṅgāra*), comic, compassionate, furious, heroic, terrifying, disgusting and awesome.

The permanent emotions have been declared to be love (*rati*), amusement, sorrow, anger, dynamic energy, fear, disgust, and wonder.[10]

There are then enumerated some thirty-three transitory emotions and eight physiological conditions, some of which accompany each primary emotion and help in the production of *rasa*.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s view of *rasa* is summed up in an aphorism (*sūtra*) in that Indian concision so productive of subsequent explanations: *vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisaṃyogād rasaniṣpattiḥ*—

[9] *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.31–3, trans. J. L. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, *Aesthetic Rapture: The Rasādhyaya of the Nāṭyaśāstra*, 2 Vols. (Poona, 1970), Vol. 1. pp. 46 ff.

[10] *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.15 and 17, trans. Masson and Patwardhan, p. 44. I have omitted Sanskrit terms which do not concern us here.

'Rasa comes from a combination of the excitants (the actors and the scene), the physiological conditions, and the transitory emotions.'

The use of poetics made of this teaching can be examined side by side with its handling of the *mahākāvya*. Bhāmaha, the earliest poetician, says that the *mahākāvya* should employ all the *rasas* separately in accord with the nature of things.[11] Daṇḍin, also of the late seventh century but probably writing after Bhāmaha, says simply that the *mahākāvya* should be full of *rasas* and *bhāvas*.[12] Neither authority places any stress on this particular characteristic of the *mahākāvya*. Both consider the presence of *rasa* in a verse to constitute a figure of speech.

The discussion now turns to the Kashmir of Ratnākara's day. Vāmana was almost certainly the minister of that name in the reign of Jayapīḍa (*c*. 776–*c*. 807). Rudraṭa, who wrote in the first half of the ninth century, was probably a Kashmiri. Lollaṭa, perhaps the brother of the devotional poet Nārāyaṇa,[13] seems to be an older contemporary of Śaṅkuka. Śaṅkuka and Ānandavardhana we have met with in the preceding chapter.

Vāmana, though an original thinker and perhaps the first poetician to quote others' poems, merits only a passing mention here. He remarks briefly that poetry has the quality of brilliance (*kānti*) when the *rasas* are prominent, and gives an instance of the erotic *rasa*. He considers the drama to be the highest form of literary composition because of the variety of its elements. With a candour unique among poeticians, he dismisses the definitions of the other genres, including *mahākāvya*, as 'rather boring'[13e], and says the reader must go elsewhere for them.

Rudraṭa, however, writing perhaps a generation later, seems to reflect a growing preoccupation both with *rasa* and with the *mahākāvya* form. He begins *Kāvyālaṃkāra* by declaring that the *mahākavi*, the author of a *mahākāvya*, who composes a poem provided with *rasa* wins fame that lasts the aeon not only for himself but also for another, the hero of his work. In line with

[11] *Kāvyālaṅkāra* 1.21. [12] *Kāvyādarśa* 1.18.

[13] Nārāyaṇa is the son of an Aparājita (Kṣemendra ad *Stavacintāmaṇi* vv. 1 and 2); one of the two verses quoted by Rājaśekhara in his *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* as being by Aparājiti (a patronymic, 'Son of Aparājita') is also quoted by Hemacandra in his Kāvyānuśasana but ascribed to Lollaṭa.

[13e] nātīva hṛdayaṅgamam, Vṛtti ad *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtra* 1.3.32.

the importance given to *rasa* in this early mention, after ten chapters concerned with *alaṃkāra*, four chapters are devoted to *rasa*. To the eight *rasas* mentioned by Bharata Rudraṭa adds two more, affection (*preyas*) and tranquillity (*śānta*).[14] He also differs from Bharata in taking the view that any emotion, not only the basic eight or ten, can become a *rasa*, for they are all capable of being relished.[15] Although he does mention the *vidūṣaka*, a comic figure appearing only in drama, his treatment of *rasa* is concerned mainly with poetry. A chapter each is given over to the two main aspects of the principal *rasa*, *śṛṅgāra*, namely love in union and love in separation. The fifteenth chapter deals with the other *rasas*.

Rudraṭa offers only a descriptive account of *rasa*. He makes no attempt to include *rasa* within a theory of poetry; he has no theory of poetry. Nevertheless, the attention he pays to *rasa* is a sign of the times.

The form of the *mahākāvya*, as it had developed beyond Kālidāsa, did not appeal to what may be called the New School of poetics. Lollaṭa was the earliest of these critics, who were contemporaries and fellow-countrymen of Rudraṭa and Ratnākara. All that is known of Lollaṭa's work is a few quotations and paraphrases. As is typical of his school he stresses the importance of *rasa* in poetry:

> It may well be that the caravan of ideas [source material] is never ending. Still a work should not be devoid of *rasa*, rather it *must* contain *rasa*.[16]

It is on the basis of this view that he attacks the *mahākāvya*.

> One should not include in a poem too many [descriptions] of bathing, picking flowers, sunsets, moon-rise, etc., even though they be lovely in themselves, if they are not directly relevant to the major *rasa* [being suggested in the poem].[17]

[14] *Śānta rasa* is first mentioned by Vāmana's contemporary, Udbhaṭa.

[15] *Kāvyālaṅkāra* 12.3 and 4; cf. V. Raghavan, *The Number of Rasas* (Adyar, 1940), pp. 115 ff.

[16] A statement attributed to Āparājiti (for whose identity with Lollaṭa see above, fn 13) by Rājaśekhara in *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* (Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Vol. 1, Baroda, 1934), p. 45; trans. J. L. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, *Aesthetic Rapture*, Vol. 1, p. 13

[17] A verse attributed to Āparājiti by Rājaśekhara, ibid; trans. Masson and Patwardhan, ibid.

Whereas Rudraṭa had simply said that a large poem should include all the *rasas*,[18] Lollaṭa and his school stressed that the purpose of a work of art was to produce a single pure and intense *rasa*. Such is the Indian zest for homogeneity, the editor of the *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, in which this passage is cited, could not believe that tradition was being assailed. He is altogether mistaken when he says, 'Evidently this view of Āparājiti [i.e. Lollaṭa] is to be applied only to the drama, because the best poets such as Kālidāsa, Bhāravi, Māgha and others, are found devoting some chapters in their Kāvyas for the lengthy description of such things, and also because the earlier writers on poetics such as Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin have laid down rules on the same lines for Mahākāvyas.'[19] The fact is that these 'descriptions' in the *mahākāvya*, the pastoral interlude as I have called them, had been sketched in only lightly by Kālidāsa, but had steadily increased in importance within each new *mahākāvya* until they found in the poem of Ratnākara the fullest expression they were ever to receive. These features are not to be found in the drama.

The two other surviving direct quotations from Lollaṭa conduct a similar polemic:

> As for the effort involved in describing rivers, mountains, oceans, trees, horses, cities, etc., in long works, whose only point is to proclaim the descriptive power of the poet, this is not highly thought of by those of broad intellect.
>
> The different varieties of rhyme, the feat of composing a stanza in such a way that its wording remains unchanged whether it is read forward or backward, *cakrabandha* and the like are very much opposed to *rasa*. A poet [foolishly] engages in them either because he is conceited or because he follows convention as blindly as sheep.[20]

Masson and Patwardhan here remark, 'Clearly in Kashmir in the ninth century there was a strong movement against the kind of poetry that was being produced throughout India at the

[18] *Kāvyālaṃkāra* 16.5.

[19] The editor of the third edition of this text in Gaekwad's Oriental Series: K. S. Ramaswami Sastri Siromani—p. 189 of his enlarged and revised edition, Baroda, 1934.

[20] Hemacandra cites these verses as Lollata's, *Kāvyānuśāsana* p. 307; Namisādhu gives the second verse anonymously ad *Kāvyālankāra* 3.59. The translation is that of Masson and Patwardhan, *Aesthetic Rapture*, Vol. 1, p. 8.

time.'[21] The same modern authors speak of Lollata's 'pleas against the trivialization of artistic experience'.[22] A major aim of the present study is to combat such a view of the developed *mahākāvya*. The *mahākāvya* has its own inner logic as an art form, but this was not perceived by the poeticians, who were above all concerned with their pet theories.

Lollaṭa's explanation of the *rasa sūtra* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is summarized by Abhinavagupta. His particular view of *rasa* is that it differs from ordinary emotion only in its intensity: it is one of the basic emotions (*sthāyibhāva*) raised to its highest pitch. He argues that this *rasa* was present in the original character of a play and is presented again in the actor through the latter's power of realization.[23] Lollaṭa also believes that there is really an endless number of *rasas*, though only the usual nine are familiar to the audience and so fit to be portrayed. For this unorthodox view he is accused of haughtiness by Abhinavagupta.[24] As we have seen, Rudraṭa in one brief remark takes a similar attitude to the number of *rasas*.

Lollaṭa's view of *rasa* is criticized by Śaṅkuka, the author of a lost *mahākāvya*. It is fitting for a New Critic that those verses of his that survive in the anthologies are clear and simple in style.

Śaṅkuka's explanation of the *rasa sūtra* is that *rasa* is produced in the spectator by his inferring the presence of real emotion in the actor before him on the stage.[25] Art (we may speak of art in general since Mammaṭa in presenting Śaṅkuka's view, if not Śaṅkuka himself, uses the analogy of a horse in a painting[26]) has a special status, being neither true nor false, and thus the perception of art also has a special status. Śaṅkuka is certainly correct when he places *rasa* in the spectator rather than anywhere else; but his criticisms of Lollaṭa's belief in the multiplicity and

[21] Ibid., p. 9. [22] Ibid.

[23] See Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *rasa-sūtra* (*Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.31), edited and translated by R. Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta*, 2nd ed. (Varanasi, 1968), Sanskrit text, p. 3; translation, pp. 25–7.

[24] See *Abhinavabhāratī*, Vol. 1, p. 298; the relevant passage is quoted and translated in J. L. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics* (Poona, 1969), p. 143 fn. 1.

[25] Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience*, p. 29.

[26] *Kāvyaprakāśa* (ed. Jhalkikar), p. 88.

variable strength of *rasa* are, in my view, as mistaken as are Abhinavagupta's of Śaṅkuka. Against Śaṅkuka Abhinavagupta resorts to the argument that imitation is a matter of making fun of something, and thus the actor's imitation which leads to the spectator's inference is reduced by Abhinavagupta to a presumption of mockery.

The earlier poeticians felt that *rasas* were important and should be included in a poem, but felt no need for a theory of the aesthetic process. The speculations of Lollaṭa and Śaṅkuka show how difficult it was to explain *rasa* satisfactorily. For the Indian tradition, the problem is finally solved some two hundred years after Śaṅkuka by Abhinavagupta:

> The Sorrowful *rasa* [for example] is grief experienced as it never is or can be in ordinary life, as directly and vividly as if it were one's own response to real circumstances (not at all as if it were the observed grief of some other person), yet with such complete detachment that one feels no anxiety, no wish to assert oneself in any way. It is the grief neither of oneself in a particular situation nor of any other person distinct from oneself: in other words it is grief *generalized*. The function of literature is to generalize emotion so that it can be tasted in this way. We can only respond insofar as the emotion evoked already lies within our experience. The tasting of *rasa* is nothing more or less than the re-experience (*anuvyavasāya*) of our own emotions. That is why it is pleasant. Consciousness resents the intrusion of anything distinct from itself which wrests it from its state of repose. But the emotion awoken by art is a calm, unthreatening, recreative ordering of what is already within us.[27]

But Abhinavagupta's view of *rasa* is largely formulated in respect of drama. More relevant here is Ratnākara's contemporary, Ānandavardhana, whose ideas on *rasa* underlie those of his distinguished commentator. In his treatise on the theory of suggestion (*dhvani*) in poetry, *Dhvanyāloka*, Ānandavardhana argues that *rasa* is suggested to the audience. He distinguishes three forms of suggestion (*dhvani*)—suggestion of sense; of figures of speech; and of *rasa*. The first two forms of *dhvani* are discussed only to be left aside from what is the work's other main theme, the priority of *rasa* over all other elements of poetry, and further, the necessity for purveying a single *rasa* through the whole work. Ānandavardhana was especially concerned to impart this

[27] Michael Coulson, *Three Sanskrit Plays* (Harmondsworth, 1981), pp. 23 ff.

to his fellow poets; he speaks with confidence of the day when 'present-day poets will adopt this teaching as to the correct procedure of poetry.'[28]

Dhvani was a theoretical distinction which had hitherto remained unregarded by poeticians; but everyone had known about *rasa* without handling it properly.

> Though there is a convention that more than one sentiment should find a place in whole works of literature, one of them alone should be made principal by the poet who is after achieving greatness for his works.[29]

> The main function of the poet lies only in making one sentiment principal throughout the poem and in employing both words and senses only in such a way that the former [i.e. the principal sentiment] is suggested clearly.[30]

Ānandavardhana concedes that *rasa* pertains first and foremost to the drama, but is particularly concerned to bring in non-dramatic poetry:

> We can see writers of epics [*mahākāvyas*] who have composed works in both these ways [with and without delineation of *rasa*]; but of the two the works that are intent upon sentiment should be regarded as superior. In dramatic works, anyway, there should be a sole intent to delineate sentiment.[31]

Of the 192 quotations given in the *vṛtti*, only ten are definitely from plays. It is perhaps relevant that, as far as we know, he did not write any plays. His practical teachings are, for the most part, concerned with the *mahākāvya*, and he constantly mentions that form.

[28] tad evam idānīṃtanakavikāvyanayopadeśe kriyamāṇe... *Dhvanyāloka*, p. 532, *vṛtti* ad 3.42. K. Krishnamoorthy, *Ānandavardhana's Dhvanyāloka* (Poona, 1955), p. 129 offers a different translation.

[29] prasiddhe'pi prabandhānāṃ nānārasanibandhane/
eko raso'ṅgīkartavyas teṣām utkarṣam icchatā//
Dhvanyāloka 3.21 translated by Krishnamoorthy, p. 90.

[30] vācyānāṃ vācakānāṃ ca yadaucityena yojanam
rasādiviṣayeṇaitat karma mukhyaṃ mahākaveḥ//
... ayam eva hi mahākaver mukhyo vyāpāro yad rasādīn eva mukhyatayā kāvyārthīkṛtya tadvyaktyanuguṇatvena śabdānām arthānāṃ copanibandhanam. *Dhvanyāloka* 3.32 and *Vrtti*. Trans. Krishnamoorthy, p. 97; note the boldness of his rendering of *rasādīn*.

[31] dvayor api mārgayoḥ sargabandhavidhāyināṃ darśanād rasatātparyaṃ sādhīyaḥ. abhineyārthe tu sarvathā rasabandhe 'bhiniveśaḥ kāryaḥ. *Vṛtti* ad *Dhvanyāloka* 3.7, ed. Pathak, p. 356; trans. Krishnamoorthy, p. 68.

Like most who write about *Dhvanyāloka* I have amalgamated the author of the *vṛtti* with the author of the *kārikās*. The two, however, may have differed in their view of the *mahākāvya*. The *kārikās* have nothing bad to say about *mahākavis*: *dhvani* shines out in the words of *mahākavis* (1.4); the speech of *mahākavis* reveals their extraordinary genius which is as supernatural as it is ever bright (1.6). Ānandavardhana counters this enthusiasm by being at pains to point out that only two or three, or at the most, five or six amongst them, such as Kālidāsa, are properly to be counted as *mahākavis*.[32] Later Ānandavardhana remarks that the destruction of *rasa* by figures of speech is amply illustrated in the works of *mahākavis*;[33] and as for propriety of emotions he says again that *mahākavis* have erred here, even though their genius can generally cover up the defect, as in the case of Kālidāsa's highly improper account of Śiva and Pārvatī's love-making in *Kumārasambhava*.[34]

Of which *mahākavis* did Ānandavardhana approve? It transpires from his remarks that he considered the two greatest poets to be the authors of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, Vyāsa and Vālmīki, followed by Kālidāsa. Minor types of *dhvani* are illustrated from Bhāravi's poem (once) and from Māgha's (twice), but anonymously as is nearly always the case. Two highly eligible candidates would seem to be Sarvasena and Ānandavardhana himself. As with Bhāravi and Māgha, a verse from Sarvasena is used to illustrate a minor variety of *dhvani*, but Ānandavardhana has the courtesy to identify the verse as being from the *Harivijaya*. Much more important is the especial approval given this *mahākāvya* because its original plot is changed so as to maintain the strength of the primary *rasa*.[35]

Ānandavardhana declares:

> A poet writing a whole work should be entirely bound by the demands made by sentiment. If he finds, therefore, in a historical source an element which is inappropriate to the sentiment, he should not hesitate to break away from it freely and to invent a new episode in its place which will be appropriate to the sentiment. The

[32] *Dhvanyāloka*, p. 94, *vṛtti* ad 1.6.

[33] Ibid., p. 249, *vṛtti* ad 2.19.

[34] Ibid., p. 365, *vṛtti* ad 3.14.

[35] Ibid., p. 368, *vṛtti* ad 3.14. Sarvasena's *Harivijaya* and Ānandavardhana's *Arjunacarita* are here put beside Kālidāsa's works.

poet achieves no purpose, indeed, by blind fidelity to the story in his sources; for this will have already been accomplished by the historical chronicles themselves.[36]

Abhinavagupta tells us that the innovation in the *Harivijaya* was that Kṛṣṇa's motive in stealing the divine *pārijāta* flowers was the propitiation of his beloved; and that in Ānandavardhana's own *Arjunacarita* such incidents as Arjuna's conquest of the underworld were not vouched for by tradition.[36a]

Ānandavardhana follows Lollaṭa in finding fault with the descriptive elements of *mahākāvya*, instancing description of a mountain;[37] and he likewise opposes undue use of *alaṃkāras* of both sound and meaning. Such poetry, which has no power to express *rasa*, which has no power to suggest, is not properly speaking poetry at all. It is only an imitation of poetry. To it Ānandavardhana gives the name of 'flashy poetry' (*citrakāvya*).[38] The proper aim of a poet is always the suggestion of *rasa*, and this, Ānandavardhana says, he has tried to do in his own poems.[39] There is, however, a skeleton in the cupboard here! In the words of Masson and Patwardhan, 'We are left with the problem of Ānanda's *Devīśataka*, where almost every verse of this poor poem is punned, and there are even verses that use only one consonant! It is a good example of *citrakāvya* at its worst.'[40] I would hesitate to call it a 'poor poem': such it is by the lights of *Dhvanyāloka*, but the author himself at the time glories in its difficulty:

> I wrote this very difficult hymn of praise to the Goddess because of my devotion to her.[41]

What Ānandavardhana has done is apply the standard *mahākāvya* manner of description of mountains and battles to the warlike daughter of the mountain! Mammaṭa cites three verses from the

[36] *Vṛtti* ad *Dhvanyāloka* 3.14, ed. Pathak, p. 368; trans. Krishnamoorthy, p. 74.

[36a] *Locana*, ed. Pathak, p. 368.

[37] *Vṛtti* ad *Dhvanyāloka* 3.18–19, ed. Pathak, p. 398. I discuss this passage below, pp. 134 ff.

[38] This translation of *citrakāvya* is the suggestion of Richard Gombrich. Krishnamoorthy translates the term as 'portrait poetry', but Ānandavardhana extends *citra* beyond its technical application (poetry which is set out to form a picture, 'concrete poetry'). The term is discussed further with reference to Ratnākara, below, pp. 135 ff.

[39] *Vṛtti* ad *Dhvanyāloka* 3.42, ed. Pathak, p. 531.

[40] Masson and Patwardhan, *Aesthetic Rapture*, Vol. 2, pp. 28 ff.

[41] tena suduṣkaram etat stotraṃ devyāḥ kṛtaṃ bhaktyā/ /*Devīśataka* 108/ /

Devīśataka as instances of the figure of sound called *yamaka*, with the general comment that all the varieties of *yamaka* are 'like worms within the body of poetry.'[42]

In this small section of the *Kāvyaprakāśa* it so happens that Ānandavardhana finds himself in the company of only Rudraṭa and Ratnākara. A natural assumption would be that at first he wrote poetry rather like those writers, but then saw the error of his ways under the influence of Lollaṭa and others of the New School. This might seem to be borne out by his remark in the *Dhvanyāloka* that *citrakāvya* is of use only in the training of beginners in the art of poetry.[43] Masson and Patwardhan say, 'perhaps we must write off the *Devīśataka* as a product of Ānanda's extreme youth.'[44] But this overlooks the fact that Ānandavardhana refers to his other two poems in the *Devīśataka*. Perhaps in the face of the continued success and popularity of the Old School, Ānandavardhana set out to show that he could outrival them at their own game.

Citrakāvya, according to Ānandavardhana, is incompatible with *rasa*, and must therefore be an abomination to the *sahṛdaya* (*rasajñataiva sahṛdayatvam*).[45] *Sahṛdaya* is a term that occurs 'scores of times'[46] in *Dhvanyāloka* and the *Locana*; it has been put forward as the name of the Kārikākāra with some justification.[47] Meaning 'man of feeling', 'man of taste', 'connoisseur', 'cultured critic', and so on, with Ānandavardhana it comes to be synonymous with practitioners of the New School of poetics. Bearing this in mind it is interesting that Ratnākara claims to have written his *mahākāvya* 'in accord with the taste (*rasa*) of the assembly of *sahṛdayas*.'[48] Does this mean that Ratnākara sought to win the approval of the New School, despite the fact that this statement is made in *citra* at the close of a *sarga* full of verbal tricks?

[42] tad etat kāvyāntargaḍubhūtam iti nāsya bhedalakṣaṇaṃ kṛtam *Kāvyaprakāśa* ed. Subhadra Jhā, Eng. trans. Ganganath Jha (Varanasi, 1967), p. 327. One of Ratnākara's *yamakas* is discussed below, pp. 123 ff

[43] *Vṛtti* ad *Dhvanyāloka* 3.42, ed. Pathak, p. 532.

[44] Masson and Patwardhan, *Aesthetic Rapture*, Vol. 2, p. 29.

[45] *Vṛtti* ad *Dhvanyāloka* 3.16, ed. Pathak, p. 394. [46] Kane, p. 194. [47] Ibid.

[48] sahṛdayagoṣṭhīrasena. This phrase occurs within a verse hidden away inside two other verses:

> Ratnākara, of the lineage of Śrīdurgadatta,
> son of Amṛtabhānu,
> wrote this poem marked with loveliness
> in accord with the taste of the assembly of *sahṛdayas*.

The term *sahṛdaya*, in its literary sense, first occurs in Vāmana's work. A propos of the *vaidarbhī* style, the best of the three styles, he quotes the following verse:

> That attaining which in speech, the excellence of the words shines forth,—where in even the unreal thing acquires a reality,—is that Vaidarbhī Diction which produces a peculiar exhilarating effect on the hearts of all men with poetic sensibility (*sahṛdayahṛdayānāṃ rañjakaḥ*).[49]

Not only does this verse use Ānandavardhana's special term, but the ideas in the verse are in tune with his. The seventeenth-century commentator Tripurahara here quotes from Abhinavagupta's *Locana* to the effect that the poet fills the stony world with *rasa* from his own sympathies,[50] and from Ānandavardhana that the poet makes insentient objects sentient.[51] It may also be noted here that the same expression, *sahṛdayahṛdaya*, is used by Vāmana's contemporary Dāmodaragupta in his satirical poem, *Kuṭṭanīmata*, 'Thoughts of a Bawd'. At one point in her course of instruction the bawd tells her pupil to say this to the client:

> Rent with deep passion,
> charged with the nectar of youth's *rasa*,
> the *sahṛdaya*'s heart
> doesn't care about earning money.[52]

---

sa ŚRĪmān mṛDUR nisarGAgahane DArpān nikṛTTAdviṣo
VAṂŚYAś cāruyaśas tadā dadhad adhaḤ SAdyo HṚtaśrīripoḥ/
DAttārgho naYAmārgaGOcaraguṇaḥ puṢṬ[Ḥ]Ībhavan māRAṇe
SEvāNAmraLAsatkarāñjaLIputair vīTĀriśaṄKAṂ suraiḥ//

Itthaṃ durdharaDArpadordruMAtayā MṚdgaṃś camūrāTAtā
BHĀsvān sāNUmati kṣapā iva tadā SŪdāraśobhāNUgaḥ/
tāṃkārair VYAthitārisaṃhati DHAnur vratyāTTAkīrtī RAṇe
yaTNĀsañjitaśiñjinīKAsaRAtaḥ KĀmaṃ tam aVYAṂsayat//(46.71, 72)

[49] *Kāvyālaṃkārasūtravṛtti*, *vṛtti* ad 1.2.21, trans. Ganganatha Jha (Poona, 1928), p. 8. Jha does not say which edition of the text he follows. This is the version in the edition edited by Bechana Jha, with the Kāmedhenu commentary of Tripurahara, p. 25:

vacasi yam adhigamya spandate vācakaśrīr
vitatham avitathatvaṃ yatra vastu prayāti/
udayati hi sa tādṛk kvāpi vaidarbharītau
sahṛdayahṛdayānāṃ rañjakaḥ ko'pi pākaḥ//.

[50] jagad grāvaprakhyaṃ nijarasabharāt pūrayati ca, *ibid.*, p. 26.

[51] bhāvān acetanān api cetanavac cetanān acetanavat/
vyavahārayati yathecchaṃ sukaviḥ kāvye svatantratayā//Ibid.

[52] gāḍhānurāgabhinnaṃ tāruṇyarasāmṛtena saṃsiktam/
na bhajati sahṛdayahṛdayaṃ vibhavārjanasambhavā cintā//
Kuṭṭanīmata 548, ed. Tripathi (Bombay, 1924), p. 162.

The words *sahṛdaya* and *rasa* may well have no literary reference here; but if they do, we have something remarkably like the popular Western notion of the Romantic poet.

Another sidelight on the New School comes from a philosopher-saint who is also mentioned by Kalhaṇa as living in the reign of Avantivarman. From this Kallaṭa we have a verse which seems to refer sarcastically to the views of the *sahṛdayas*:

> What's the good of the nectar of poetry,
> unless even a fool can thrill within,
> inundated by streams of *rasa*![53]

Whether or not Ratnākara was using *sahṛdaya* in a specific sense cannot be determined. How far he was in accord with *sahṛdayas* old and new will be discussed in the closing chapter of our study.

It remains to subject Ānandavardhana's theory of *rasa-dhvani*, the suggestion of *rasa*, to a critical review. The trouble with *dhvani*, to begin forthrightly, is that it seeks certainty and precision where they are not to be found. From the point of view of modern criticism, those opponents of *dhvani* who declared that suggestion was beyond the scope of words and perceptible only in the hearts of *sahṛdayas*,[54] were correct, with the rider that we nowadays are better able to express the inexpressible.[55]

The *Dhvanyāloka* begins its treatment of *dhvani* by saying that it shines out in the language of *mahākavis*, surpassing the obvious constituent parts, as does beauty in women.[56] The next analogy used for *dhvani* in the *kārikās* is profoundly significant:

[53] Ingalls, *Anthology*, pp. 48 and 52.

[54] For a convenient account of the position of the *anākhyeyavādins* (according to the *Dhvanyāloka*) see Masson and Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa*, pp. 6 ff; the authors give an enthusiastic account of Ānandavardhana's counter-arguments.

[55] The attitudes of present-day literary criticism have been developed by the intensive work of many people over a long period: it is no merit of our own that we are able to approach literature in ways infinitely more sophisticated than Ānandavardhana's. Ānandavardhana deserves all honour for recognizing the importance of suggestion in literature.

[56] pratīyamānaṃ punar anyad eva vastv asti vāṇīṣu mahākavīnām/
yat tatprasiddhāvayavātiriktaṃ vibhāti lāvaṇyam ivāṅganāsu/ /1.4/ /
Note that here *lāvaṇya* is often wrongly translated as charm (e.g. Krishnamoorthy, *Ānandavardhanā's Dhvanyāloka*; and Kunjunni Raja, *Indian Theories of Meaning*, p. 284. In Sanskrit poetry there is no conception of a delightful and beautiful personality, which is to say, charm, as distinct from a beautiful body. Ugly people cannot be charming. Karma is only a partial explanation of why this should be so.

Just as a man interested in perceiving objects (in the dark) directs his efforts towards securing the flame of a lamp, since it is a means to realize his end, so also does one who is ultimately interested in the suggested meaning first evince interest in the conventional meaning.[57]

Let us consider Ānandavardhana's very first example, given in the Vṛtti to the *kārikā* that compares *dhvani* to the overall beauty of a woman. After the comment that *dhvani* is the veritable nectar of the gods, Ānandavardhana cites the following verse, as instance of the most elementary *dhvani*, prohibition implied when injunction is stated:

Reverend sir, amble where you please!
The little dog has been killed
by the fierce lion
that lives in the river-side thicket.[58]

Abhinavagupta explains that a woman is here addressing a wandering ascetic who is walking towards the place where she was to meet her lover. It would be easy to add, for instance: the speaker combines urgent desire for her lover with a scarcely veiled anger that does indeed wish that the interloper should be gobbled up. The clever lie conceals a deep viciousness. Further, her lover, perhaps already concealed in the thicket, might well have for her, something of the power and force of a wild animal, which is why this particular lie occurs to her.[59]

For the *dhvani* school (using the metaphor of the expressed meaning as the light of the lamp), the reader knows what he is looking for in the dark, and is never surprised by what he finds. Thus the standard example, 'The village of cow-herds is on the Ganges' (*gaṅgāyāṃ ghoṣaḥ*), which by the power of *lakṣaṇā*

[57] ālokārthī yathā dīpaśikhāyāṃ yatnavāñ janaḥ/
tadupāyatayā tadvad arthe vācye tadādṛtaḥ//1.9//

[58] bhama dhammia vīsattho so suṇao ajja mārio deṇa/
golāṇaikacchakuḍaṅgavāsiṇā dariasīheṇa//
Dhvanyāloka, ed. Pathak, p. 52.

[59] On the grounds that a dog is not a worthy foe for a lion, Mahimabhaṭṭa proposed to replace the lion with a bear, emending *sīheṇa* to *rikkheṇa* (*Vyaktiviveka*, ed. Rewāprasāda Dwivēdī (Varanasi, 1964), p. 466). Such is the power of propriety over poeticians of all persuasions! Mahimabhaṭṭa's objection to the lion has no force against the interpretation proposed here. The woman comes out with an unlikely danger (in her lover's image) under the pressure of the moment.

(indirect indication, metaphor) means, 'The village of cow-herds is on the bank of the Ganges', has a third meaning thanks to *dhvani*: 'The village of cow-herds is pure and holy since it is beside the sacred river Ganges.' No one, I believe, has proposed that the suggestion could be that the village is liable to flooding, or that the villagers are liable to be eaten by crocodiles. That kind of suggestion would be inauspicious and contrary to *rasa*. And above all what is to be suggested is *rasa*. This is not a subjective process. The varieties of *dhvani* are clearly subdivided, just as the several *rasas* are clearly demarcated.

Philip Rawson was referring to the theories of *rasa* and *dhvani* when he affirmed:

> I believe that in the field of aesthetics ... [Indian thinkers] put forward many ideas which MUST be brought into our present-day debates on art—ideas which we can use on works of art as one uses a can-opener on a can, to get out the meat.[60]

Rawson's analogy is all too appropriate. Indian theorists in particular (though all theorists are here in common danger) label and package the literary experience. The theory of *rasa* has its beginnings in a culinary analogy.[61] The poet is to alter his subject-matter to suit the intended *rasa*.[62] A bland propriety is paramount.[63] Poetics seeks to condition not only the poetry, but also the reader. To be fully receptive to poetry the reader is to become mirror-like, polishing himself by the study and practice of poetry.[64] Since mirrors in ancient India were usually of metal

[60] From 'An Exalted Theory of Ornament', in *Aesthetics in the Modern World*, ed. H. Osborne (London, 1968), cited without page reference by Masson and Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa*, pp. 1 ff.

[61] 'As gourmets (*bhaktavit*) savor food prepared with many tasty ingredients (*dravya*) and many spices, so sensitive people (*budha*) enjoy in their minds the permanent emotions presented with different kinds of the acting out of (transient) emotions (and presentation of their causes). This is why (these primary emotions) are known as *nāṭyarasas*.' *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.32, 33, trans. Masson and Patwardhan, *Aesthetic Rapture*, Vol. 1, p. 47.

[62] See above, p. 43.

[63] *Dhvanyāloka*, p. 362:

anaucityādṛte nānyad rasabhaṅgasya kāraṇam/
prasiddhaucityabandhas tu rasyopaniṣat parā//

'Nothing can harm *rasa* except impropriety. Accordance with well-established propriety is the great secret of *rasa*.'

[64] *Locana*, p. 40: yeṣāṃ kāvyānuśīlanābhyāsavaśād viśadībhūte manomukure varṇanīyabhavanayogyatā te svahṛdayasaṃvādabhājaḥ sahṛdayāḥ. 'Those people

and were polished with a mixture of ashes, the reader must, in other words, grind himself down to a perfectly smooth reflecting surface. The *rasa-dhvani* school attempts to leave us with a universal, impersonal experience passing between people who try to be as like each other as possible. Following up Rawson's analogy of the can-opener, the *rasa-dhvani* doctrine brings poetry perilously close to a kind of tomato soup that everybody is conditioned to enjoy.

Ānandavardhana laments the existence of poets who recognize no laws, who are obsessed with figures of speech, and who wantonly persist in producing works without the least intention of incorporating *rasa*.[65] Although he says, 'The poet alone is creator in the boundless realm of poetry,'[66] he wishes to be legislator there. The ornamentalists, as they may be called, deserve some support. Even if they concentrated myopically on their figures, they were correspondingly more open in their attitude to the outside world. While the aestheticians altered the world to further the production of *rasa*, the ornamentalists allowed metaphor to dance freely in their poems, and to go wherever it liked.

To elaborate this point I shall look briefly at three verses which I do not think Ānandavardhana would have approved of. First, a verse which fails to find favour with Ingalls at least.

> Now the great cloud-cat,
> darting out his lightning tongue
> licks the creamy moon
> from the saucepan of the sky.[67]

Ingalls introduces the verse thus:

> It would be possible to give many beautiful examples of the subtle use of figured speech in Sanskrit poetry. But I wish instead to give a

who are capable of identifying with the subject matter, as the mirror of their hearts has been polished through constant repetition and study of poetry, and who sympathetically respond in their own hearts—those (people) are what are known as sensitive readers.' Trans. Masson and Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa*, p. 78, fn. 4.

[65] etac ca citraṃ kavīnāṃ viśṛṅkhalagirāṃ rasāditātparyam anapekṣyaiva kāvya-pravṛttidarśanād asmābhiḥ parikalpitam (*Dhvanyāloka*, ed. Pathak, p. 529); dṛśyante ca kavayo'laṅkāranibandhanaikarasā anapekṣitarasāḥ prabandheṣu (p. 376).

[66] apāre kāvyasaṃsāre kavir ekaḥ prajāpatiḥ/ (*Dhvanyāloka*, ed. Pathak, p. 530).

[67] *Subhāsitaratnakoṣa* 257 (trans. Ingalls):

pibati vyomakaṭāhe saṃsaktacalattaḍillatārasanaḥ/
meghamahāmārjāraḥ saṃprati candrātapakṣīram//

> rather frigid one. I do this partly because the example affords a convenient comparison with a bit of English verse, but more because I wish to finish with what might be called the limitations of Sanskrit poetry before proceeding to an account of its capabilities.

He then comments as follows on the verse:

> The effect here is gained by intellectual, entirely rational means. The metaphor is complete in every detail: cat, tongue, cream, and saucepan—cloud, moon, lightning, and sky. It is almost like an exercise from a manual of logic under the chapter 'Analogy'. Compare the verse with a well-known passage of T. S. Eliot, which uses similar ideas, but uses them very differently:
>
> The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes
> The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
> Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
> Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains, ...
>
> This from one who is often called an intellectual poet. And yet Eliot gets his effect in every line from the irrational, the strong but imprecise memory we have of fog and cats, the childhood associations of certain words and idioms. Consider the line: 'Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening.' It brings to sudden flower certain homely and completely natural phrases: 'licks his tongue around the bowl,' or 'licks his tongue into the corner of the dish.' The idiom is completely transfigured by bringing it into juxtaposition with the last three words, 'of the evening'. This transfiguration of language becomes impossible without a natural-language basis.
>
> I think one will find the verse of Yogeśvara cold and stiff when placed beside Eliot's.[68]

But to one reader, myself, the Sanskrit verse is neither cold nor stiff. I see it as a bold conjunction of domesticity and voluptuousness, in no way handicapped by being written in an 'artificial' language. The Sanskrit poet finds illicit indulgence everywhere! The whole universe is a universe of enjoyment. Like a cat, the ornamentalist feels free to lick, to taste, whatsoever he chooses.

T. S. Eliot is a dangerous author to quote if one is a votary of *rasa*. Much of what he has to say about poetry fits the ornamentalists, as here:

> When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in

[68] Ingalls, *Anthology*, pp. 10 ff.

love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.[69]

The second verse I wish to consider here is this:

The cat, thinking its rays are milk,
licks them from the dish;
the elephant, seeing them woven through the lattice of the trees,
takes them for lotus stems;
the damsel after love would draw them from her couch
as if they were her dress:
see how the moon in its pride of light
has cozened all the world.[70]

The figure of speech here is *bhrāntimān*, 'illusion': when there is cognition of another thing at the sight of something similar, it is 'illusion'. It differs from so many other figures of speech in that the illusion is within the poem, within the subjects, whereas normally the illusion is on the surface: the cloud does not imagine that it itself is a cat nor that the moon is a saucepan of milk. Like the moon in this second verse, the ornamentalist intoxicated by his power over metaphor delights to confuse the world.

Lastly,

The night was deep,
the lamp shone forth with heavy flame,
and that darling is an expert
in the rite which passion prompts;
but, my dear, he made love slowly,
slowly and with limbs constrained,
for the bed kept up a creaking
like an enemy with gnashing teeth.[71]

[69] T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays, 1917–1932* (New York, 1932), p. 246.

[70] *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 905 (trans. Ingalls):
kapāle mārjāraḥ paya iti karān leḍhi śaśinas
tarucchidraprotān bisam iva karī saṃkalayati/
ratānte talpasthān harati vanitāpy aṃśukam iti
prabhāmattaś candro jagad idam aho viklavayati//

[71] Ibid. 573 (trans. Ingalls):
atipraudhārātrir bahalaśikhadīpaḥ prabhavati
priyaḥ premārabdhasmaravidhirasajñaḥ param asau/
sakhi svairaṃ svairaṃ suratam akarod vrīḍitavapur
yataḥ paryaṅko'yaṃ ripur iva kaḍatkāramukharaḥ//

The simile here offends against the doctrine of *rasa*, which in so far as the love-making is impeded is impeded itself[72] But what a powerful verse! The translation by Professor Brough, constrained by rhyme, ruins the verse by ending,

> For the wretched bed upon which we lay
> Creaked, and had far too much to say.[73]

We have here *dhvani*, though my interpretation will be very different from anything Ānandavardhana might have said. The pleasure that is taken is illicit. The couple are deceiving someone, someone who if he (or she) knew what was going on would gnash his teeth and become an enemy. We also have here a rare bird in *kāvya*—a suggestion of guilt. Pursuing the image yet further, even though the Sanskrit does not explicitly mention teeth, 'gnashing' does seem a perfect translation of *kaḍatkāra*[74] and thus teeth are just beneath the surface of the image; at a deeper level there may be, given the context, an allusion to vagina dentata.[75] The male poet, assuming he is male, in giving a woman's account of love-making that was not quite satisfactory, makes use, consciously or unconsciously, of an image (gnashing teeth) not unconnected with copulation highly unsatisfactory to the male.

The exponents of *dhvani*, making use of the light cast by the expressed sense, sought to find in the surrounding darkness only what they expected to find. There is no knowing what the ornamentalist poet will come up with.

Returning to the *mahākāvya*, it must be admitted that in regard to *rasa* its form developed in a manner parallel to the aims of the New School. That is to say, the long descriptive sequences can be seen as the poets' attempt to achieve deep and sustained *rasa*. Yet this attempt annoyed the advocates of *rasa* almost as much as did the poets' delight in occasional 'concrete' poetry. The poets failed to meet the requirements of the New

[72] That is to say, in the case of 'love in enjoyment' (*saṃbhogaśṛṅgāra*).

[73] John Brough, *Poems from the Sanskrit* (Penguin, 1968), p. 127.

[74] Cf. Ratnākara's use of the very similar onomatopoeic *kaṇat*: applied to the crushing of precious stones, this sound is compared to the gnashing of teeth (*dantasaṃghaṭṭa*) 7.40. Ratnākara's choice of *kaṇat* rather than *kaḍat*, it may be further noted, is dictated by alliteration—*ratnakaṇakoṇakaṇatkṛtiśrut*.

[75] For vagina dentata in Śaiva mythology see Wendy O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva* (London, 1973), Index of Motifs, p. 377.

School because they were also ornamentalists. Certainly knowing their *Nāṭyaśāstra* well, the poets felt the desirability of *rasa*, but their ornamental idiom had the result that they were, in Eliot's phrase, 'constantly amalgamating disparate experience', 'forming new wholes'. In poeticians' terms, poetry seesaws between their two opposing spheres of interest: *rasa* and *alaṃkāra*. A less blinkered view will give a more coherent picture.

CHAPTER 3

Kings, Courts, and Poets

In this chapter I shall discuss in particular the connections between *kāvya*, which Louis Renou stressed was a natural means of expression in India,[1] and the society which gave rise to it.

Sociological attempts to explain literature rightly arouse suspicions above all in literary critics, in *sahṛdayas*.[2] But I intend merely to provide context and perspective for the phenomenon that is *kāvya*. Virtually all textual sources present a highly idealized picture of ancient Indian society. This lack of hard evidence makes it relatively easy to think one discerns cause and effect in the relationship between society and the final artistic product. While theories may be easily invented it is correspondingly difficult for them to be convincing; yet, despite its being tentative in the extreme, the sociology of *kāvya* is crucial to the proper understanding of *kāvya*. Speaking in general of *kāvya*, De pronounced, 'there was surely nothing wrong with the genius of the poets, but something was wrong in the literary atmosphere.'[3] I propose, in a preliminary way, to test the atmosphere.

The keyword in the title of this chapter is 'court'—it is the court that comprises poet, poem, king and audience. The court, in India as in many other societies, is a phenomenon of the utmost cultural importance; courts everywhere seem to have a great deal in common, but so far there has been no general and

[1] *Kāvya* is 'a mode of expression which, under the general conditions of Indian thought, has been as legitimate, and to speak plainly, as *natural* as any other, even though it may seem to us far too difficult (par trop dénué de facilité) [but what is easy (facile) in India?].' L. Renou, 'Sur la structure du *kāvya*', *Journal Asiatique*, 1959, p. 61.

[2] E.g. Wellek and Warren: 'The relation between literature and society is usually discussed by starting with the phrase, derived from De Bonald, that 'literature is an expression of society'. But what does this axiom mean? If it assumes that literature, at any given time, mirrors the current social situation 'correctly', it is false; it is commonplace, trite and vague if it means only that literature depicts some aspects of social reality.' R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 95.

[3] S. K. De in S. N. Dasgupta and S. K. De, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 40 ff.

comparative analysis of them. Worse, is the lack of specific information about the Hindu court. *Kāvya* itself is a prime source of information here. There can be little in the way of concrete facts, but a few tentative interconnections and interrelationships between the court and its poetry do emerge. I am aware that much *kāvya* was written outside courts, in monasteries and even in villages, but undoubtedly its spiritual home was the court.

After this preamble let me state what exactly I do hope to show in this chapter. Beginning with the origins of *kāvya*, we shall see the importance of eulogy in *kāvya*. Eulogy itself can only be understood by appreciating the Indian view of kingship, which is presented here mainly with material from *kāvya*. I then look behind the ideology to discern considerable insecurity in court circles. I suggest that *kāvya* provides a sense of security. In this, *kāvya* is analogous to ritual. Having looked at *kāvya* as cause I then see it as effect, the product of court idleness: play, irresponsible creativity. Thus far, we have the two sides of the same coin. *Kāvya* works hard to produce order; at the same time, it is free to create disorder. I then take up another line of argument, and suggest that *kāvya* is in some sense an updating of the Vedas, and, possibly, an attempt to displace their authority. Finally, I take a look at the status of the poet.

In this chapter the *kāvya* quoted is in the main that of Kālidāsa and Bāṇa. Kālidāsa being an early poet (of poets whose work is extant), has a more open, fresher, attitude to his environment than his successors. Bāṇa's work, the *Harṣacarita*, has the enormous value of being in its early chapters autobiographical, and I hope to make good use of this precious information. He is, moreover, Ratnākara's professed model.[4] The *Haravijaya* is intimately connected with the court: Śiva and Andhaka are both shown in their assembly halls, and their courtiers debate before them; Śiva's envoy, at the beginning of his speech, eulogizes the demon king. All this, however, is a transposition into mythological terms of human reality. This latter must be understood first. (I shall begin my examination of the subject-matter of the *Haravijaya* by discussing the *gaṇa*-courtiers in Chapter Six.)

Keith saw *kāvya* as a natural development of literary expression,[5] a development spurred on by royal patronage.

[4] See below, pp. 106 ff.

[5] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 41.

> It would indeed have been surprising if the simplicity of the earlier epic had not gradually yielded to greater art ... . Into the Rigveda itself have been admitted hymns which contrive to flatter patrons as well as extol the gods, and added verses, styled praises of gifts (*dānastutis*), recount the enormous rewards which a clever singer might obtain. We cannot doubt that from such contests [between poets] must have sprung the desire to achieve ever-increasing perfection of form as compared with the more pedestrian style of the mere narrative of the epic.

Keith then mentions the developing form of love poetry, giving here only internal cause for change:

> In yet another sphere such heightening of style must have been striven after. The Vedic poets, who can compare the goddess Dawn to a fair dancer, to a maiden who unveils her bosom to a lover, cannot have been incapable of producing love poetry for secular use. Nor is it doubtful that it was the early writers of the love lyric who enriched Sanskrit with a vast abundance of elaborate metres. ... the limited theme of love demanded variety of expression if it were to be worthily developed.[6]

Love poetry figured in court contests as well as eulogy. Moreover, they have something in common, each being in praise of a special person. The other major theme of poetry, the gods, is closely allied to panegyric. The importance of panegyric has been widely recognized. To refer again to Keith:

> To the kings of India we unquestionably owe most of the poets of repute; patronage by the king was at once the reward of skill in panegyric and the means of obtaining the leisure for serious composition and a measure of publicity for the works produced. It was the duty of the king to bridge the gulf between wealth and the poetic talent, of the poet to save his patron from the night of oblivion which else must assuredly settle on him when his mortal life closed.[7]

The distinction between panegyric and 'serious composition' must be denied. A high proportion of *mahākāvya* describes the achievements of the poet's monarch, and even when gods are the apparent subject, kings may be thereby represented. In any case, the panegyric deserves further enquiry. Deeper analysis of the relationship between king and poet is provided by Ingalls:

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., pp. 52 ff.

> In some respects Sanskrit panegyrics are less distasteful than those of other literatures ... they were so ritualized in India that they had become impersonal. Each morning the king would be awakened by the panegyric of his bards. The religious–magical purpose of that ritual may be seen from mythology. In the myths we find that whenever Indra, the prototype of the king, stands in need of strength the gods and sages gather to praise him. By the verses which magnify the fame of the god he grows in material might and stature ... To say a thing in ritual is to bring it to pass. The ritual praise of kings became as necessary as the ritual deprecation of sickness. By being ritualized Sanskrit panegyric loses much of the hypocrisy and by its impersonality it lacks much of the shamefulness of personal flattery.[8]

To take first Ingalls' final and minor point, I would remark that opinions about flattery vary considerably according to time and place: Ingalls' attitude is that of the modern West. Ingalls' concern with his own canons of literary evaluation tends to make him hurry over his important observation with regard to ritual. I shall suggest that ritual is a key element in *kāvya* at large.

Indian notions of kingship need fuller consideration. In A. L. Basham's words, 'The king, the people, the land and the natural phenomena in ancient India were thought of as united in a way quite transcending all rational explanation.'[9]

> Welfare, good rains, sickness, calamities and death among the people owe their origin to the king.[10]
>
> ...
>
> It is in consequence of the sinful acts of kings that virtue decreases greatly and sin begins to prosper. And when all this takes place, the subjects of the kingdom begin to decay. And it is then, O Brahman, that ill-looking monsters and dwarfs and hunch-backs and large-headed persons and men who are blind or deaf or those who have paralysed eyes or are destitute of the power of procreation begin to take their birth. It is from the sinfulness of kings that their subjects suffer numerous evils.[11]

[8] Ingalls, *An Anthology*, p. 291.

[9] Basham, *Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture* (Bombay, 1966), p. 20.

[10] MBh, ŚāntiP.139.9, cited by John W. Spellman, *Political Theory of Ancient India* (Oxford, 1964), p. 211.

[11] MBh. (R) VanaP.207, cited Spellman, ibid.

Thus, it is misleading to say, 'The ritual praise of kings became as necessary as the ritual deprecation of sickness,' for the former essentially includes the latter. To strengthen the king was to strengthen all man's estate.

The following is a specific instance of the same idea:

> The king, roaming about at night accompanied only by a friend, being afflicted with thirst, went to the house of a hetaera, and by the mouth of his friend asked for water. Then the hetaera with genuine affection, after some delay, brought a cocoa-nut shell full of sugar-cane juice, not without distress. When the king's friend asked her the cause of her distress, she said, 'In old times a stalk of sugar-cane contained enough juice to fill a pitcher together with a saucer, but now that the king's mind is evilly disposed towards his subjects, for a long time the stalk of a sugar-cane has yielded only enough juice to fill a saucer; this is the cause of my distress.' When the king heard that he reflected that, when a certain merchant exhibited a great play in the temple of Śiva, he had formed the intention of plundering him, and that so the hetaera's speech was true; then he went back from that place, and after reaching his own palace, went to sleep. The next day the king, having become full of compassion for his subjects, went to the house of the hetaera; and then the hetaera said, 'It is evident from the sign, that there is abundance of sugar-cane juice, that the king is now loving his subjects.'[12]

Pleasure-loving kings are all too subject to greed, but if the king so wills the world may be easily put to rights.

The king is said to be divine; how this is so is stated in varying ways. The most widely held view is that the king is made up of the eight guardian deities of the world—the Moon, Fire, Sun, Wind, Indra, the lords of wealth and water (Kubera and Varuṇa), and Yama.[13] Manu gives a detailed account of the king's functions based on these eight divinities:

> Let him shower benefits on the kingdom as Indra sends rain; let him draw taxes as the sun the water; let him penetrate everywhere through his secret agents as the wind moves everywhere; let him control his subjects as Yama subjects all men; let him punish the wicked as Varuṇa binds them with his ropes; let him be welcomed with great joy like the moon; let him be ardent in wrath and

[12] C. H. Tawney trans., *The Prabandhacintāmaṇi or Wishing-stone of Narratives* (composed by Merutaṅga Ācārya), (Calcutta, 1901), p. 70 (slightly altered).

[13] Manu 5.96. Cf. Spellman, *Political Theory*, pp. 31 ff.

endowed with brilliant energy, destroying the wicked like Agni; let him support his subjects like the Earth.[14]

Kālidāsa refers to this when describing Raghu's conception:

Then, as the sky received the light issued from the eyes of Atri, as the river of the gods received the seed of Śiva deposited by fire, so, for the prosperity of the king's lineage, the queen became pregnant with the embryo endowed with the exalted lustre of the guardians of the quarters.[15]

This lustre, or fiery energy (*tejas*), is a regular attribute of kings.[16] It is vividly described in the case of the baby Raghu:

As the natural splendour (*tejas*) of the well-born child spread around the bed of the lying-in chamber, suddenly the night-lamps lost their brilliance as though they were painted on canvas.[17]

The majesty of the king is entirely manifest:

Like Mount Meru dominating the earth, he stood with a body whose strength surpassed all, whose splendour defeated all and which rose above all around.[18]

Three of the four ends of life are pursued by the king on a grand scale. He serves Dharma by protecting and dispensing justice to his people; he serves Artha by attending to his people's material prosperity; and the whole kingdom is for his enjoyment, for him to serve Kāma. However, Dharma and Artha are here inseparable, for as we have seen unrighteous behaviour on the part of the king causes his subjects to suffer material loss.

[14] Manu 9, 303 ff., cited by J. Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View* (Leiden, 1966), p. 31.

[15] *Raghuvaṃśa* 2.75, trans. Robert Antoine as *The Dynasty of Raghu* (Calcutta, 1972), p. 34):

atha nayanasamuttham jyotir atrer iva dyauḥ surasarid iva tejo vahniniṣṭhyūtam aiśaṃ/
narapatikulabhūtyai garbham ādhatta rājñī gurubhir abhiniviṣṭaṃ lokapālānubhāvaiḥ//

[16] See Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship*, s.v. tejas, p. 146.

[17] *Raghuvaṃśa* 3.15 (trans. Antoine, p. 37):

ariṣṭaśayyāṃ parito visāriṇā sujanmanas tasya nijena tejasā/
niśīthadīpāḥ sahasā hatatviṣo babhūvur ālekhyasamarpitā iva//

[18] *Raghuvaṃśa* 1.14 (trans. Antoine, p. 14):

sarvātiriktasāreṇa sarvatejobhibhāvinā/
sthitaḥ sarvonnatenorvīṃ krāntvā merur ivātmanā//

The role of the king is succinctly stated by three terms: *bhū-bharaṇa*, *bhū-pālana*, *bhū-bhojana*—carrying, protecting, and enjoying the earth.[19]

Kalhaṇa's way of saying that such and such a king reigned is to state that he 'supported the earth'; here put generally:

> Renowned kings, in the shelter of whose arms this Earth wearing the girdle of the oceans had rested as if in the shade of a forest and enjoyed peace and security from hostile attack, would not even be remembered without its favour—to the art of the poet which is sublime in its nature, we offer salutation.[20]

Poets support the supporters of the Earth! But this aperçu of Kalhaṇa's forestalls my argument. Derrett remarks, 'Both in pure *kāvya* and in poetical inscriptions the king is repeatedly shown actually carrying the Earth. The Earth is taken up on his arm, is cradled there, is hoisted upon his shoulder and there carried as if by an Atlas.'[21] The most graphic representation of this is provided by sculptures of Viṣṇu's Boar *avatāra*, popular with Gupta kings, massive as a mountain, bearing the earth, a frail woman, on its mighty arm. The notion of *bhū-bharaṇa* provides poets with a highly convenient pun on king and mountain, *bhū-bhṛt*, 'bearer of the earth'. More practically, the king supports the earth by ensuring rain.

> Now above all the king makes it to rain, and this not only through his fitness as ruler, but through his magical presence itself; where there is no king this fruitful moisture does not fall. But the king also brings the curse of drought on his land if he is evil, while under the good king the gift of rain in right measure is poured on the kingdom, which is the beginning and end of all for India, the land of agriculture.[22]

This notion, implicitly expressed in a verse of the *Raghuvaṃśa*,

[19] See J. Duncan M. Derrett, 'Bhū-bharaṇa, bhū-pālana, bhū-bhojana: An Indian Conundrum', *B.S.O.A.S.*, Vol. 22/1, 1959, pp. 108–23.

[20] *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 1.46, trans. R. S. Pandit, as *Rājataraṅgiṇī, the River of Kings*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta, 1968), p. 14:

bhujavanatarucchāyāṃ yeṣāṃ niṣevya mahaujasāṃ
jaladhiraśanā mediny āsīd asāv akutobhayā/
smṛtim api na te yānti kṣmāpā vinā yadanugraham
prakṛtimahate kurmas tasmai namaḥ kavikarmaṇe//

[21] Derrett, 'Bhū-bharaṇa, bhū-pālana', p. 111.

[22] Johann Jakob Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1953), p. 286 fn.

Under his father the subjects had prospered as rivers increase during the month of Śrāvaṇa; under Atithi, they became more prosperous, like rivers in the month of Bhādrapada.[23]

is clearly stated in the penultimate verse of *Śākuntala*:

For countless ages may the god of gods,
Lord of the atmosphere, by copious showers
Secure abundant harvests to thy subjects;
And thou by frequent offerings preserve
The Thunder's friendship. Thus by interchange
Of kindly actions may you both confer
Unnumbered benefits on earth and heaven.[24]

It is the king's duty also to protect the earth, a notion that concedes more to reality than that of carrying the earth. Carrying the earth symbolises effortless and total mastery, protecting admits a somewhat lesser role for the king. His duty of protecting is well symbolised by Dilīpa's zealous attendance on the cow Nandinī;[25] and this protection is, ideally, total:

While he [Dilīpa] was governing the earth, if amorous women fell asleep half way to the pleasure-garden, even the wind would not disturb their garments: who then would dare stretch a hand to ravish them?[26]

A king was supposed to be always strong and valorous, even from his earliest years:

A lordly elephant, though young, is capable of smashing other elephants. A young cobra possesses venom very deadly in its effect. A king though young, can protect the world. The ability

[23] *Raghuvaṃśa* 17.41 (trans. Antoine, p. 197):
prajās tadguruṇā nadyo nabhaseva vivardhitāḥ/
tasmiṃs tu bhūyasīṃ vṛddhiṃ nabhasyetā ivāyayuḥ/ /

[24] *Sakuntala* 7.34, ed. C. R. Devadhar and N. G. Suru (Poona, 1934), p. 246, trans. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *Śakoontalā*, 8th edn. revised (London and New York, n.d.), p. 205):
tava bhavatu biḍaujāḥ prājyavṛṣṭiḥ prajāsu
tvam api vitatayajñaḥ vajriṇaṃ prīṇayasva/
yugaśataparivartān evam anyonyakṛtyair
nayatam ubhayalokānugrahaślāghanīyaiḥ/ /

[25] As Derrett notes, 'Bhū-bharaṇa, bhū-pālana, p. 112.

[26] *Raghuvaṃśa* 6.75 (trans. Antoine, p. 77):
yasmin mahīṃ śāsati kāminīnāṃ nidrāṃ vihārārdhapathe gatānām/
vāto'pi nāsraṃsayad aṃśukāni ko lambayed āharaṇāya hastam//

to discharge one's duty is innate in one and has no relationship with one's age.[27]

Most realistic of the three functions is that of *bhū-bhojana*. The king's performance in this direction was never merely nominal. The king was the enjoyer of his kingdom, the eater of the people, as the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* starkly phrased it. It was by no means the case, Hocart points out, that 'the primary function of a king is to govern, to be the head of the administration ... he is nothing of the kind. He is the repository of the gods, that is of the life of the group. He dispenses prosperity to that group.'[28] But if magically, ideologically, the king is thought to ensure the kingdom's prosperity, materially he is the focus of the kingdom's wealth. He needs to take possession to dispense. By a significant pun, *kara*, meaning both 'ray' and 'tax,' taxation is linked with rainmaking:

> It was for the benefit of his subjects that the [Dilīpa] collected taxes from them: for the sun absorbs the water in order to shower it a thousandfold.[29]

It was to distribute riches that they amassed riches.[30] The generosity of kings was often excessive. Thus Raghu gave away his entire treasury, only to be gravely embarrassed by a Vedic student's request for the wherewithal to pay his teacher—fourteen crores of golden coins. Kautsa, the student, observes with asperity,

> 'When the autumn cloud has poured out its reserve of water, even the *cātaka* bird stops respecting it.'[31]

[27] *Vikramorvaśīya* 5.18 (ed. and trans. H. R. Karnik and S. G. Desai (Bombay, 1959), p. 146 f.; trans. slightly altered):

śamayati gajān anyān gandhadvipaḥ kalabho'pi san
bhavati sutarāṃ vegodagraṃ bhujaṅgaśiśor viṣam
bhuvam adhipater bālāvastho'py alaṃ parirakṣituṃ
na khalu vayasā jātyaivāyaṃ svakāryasaho bharaḥ//

[28] A. M. Hocart, *Kings and Councillors*, 2nd edn. (Chicago and London, 1970), p. 99.

[29] *Raghuvaṃśa* 1.18 (trans. Antoine, p. 15):

prajānām eva bhūtyarthaṃ sa tābhyo balim agrahīt/
sahasraguṇam utsraṣṭum ādatte hi rasaṃ raviḥ//

[30] *Raghuvaṃśa* 1.7 (trans. Antoine, p. 14):

tyāgāya saṃbhṛtārthānāṃ....

[31] *Raghuvaṃśa* 5.17 (trans. Antoine, p. 58):

.... nirgalitāmbugarbhaṃ śaradghanaṃ nārdati cātako'pi//

(The *cātaka* or crested cuckoo refuses to drink except from the rain-cloud, according to the convention of *kāvya*.)

When the king prepares to attack the God of Wealth, gold rains down from the sky—the rain motif continues.

The pun on *kara*, 'taxes' and 'ray,' and the cycle of water rising to form clouds and falling as rain refer to what the sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt terms 'free-floating resources'.[32]

He observes that 'the rulers of historical bureaucratic empires ... were interested in a [continuous] mobilization which would be largely independent both of the fixed ascriptive rights and duties of [other] groups and strata, and of the wishes of their members.'[33] Obviously, the amassing and distribution of wealth, keeping it flowing, served to prevent any one other than the king gaining wealth and power. By being lavishly generous the king not only gave impetus to the circulation of wealth, he also secured for himself another free-flowing resource, prestige.

To distribute wealth it was necessary to amass it. *Kāvya*, and other Sanskrit texts, speak simply of taxes. Historians also lay great stress on all the various forms of taxation, perhaps under the influence of modern empires.[34] However, doubt has rightly been cast upon this imperial ideal. 'We should envisage a taxation-plunder continuum, in which *taxation* serves as the form of exaction imposed in areas where the dynastic power is strongest, *tribute* as the form imposed on more peripheral/ powerful chiefs, and *plunder* as the irregular exaction taken from the most distant places which were ordinarily subject to rival dynastic centres. The conventional view seems to be that taxation was the most important, and plunder the least important (if not aberrant) source of income for the Indian state... We can understand the dynamics of the Chola politico-military system—and by extension, that of many other Indian and non-Indian dynastic states—only if we reverse these priorities.'[35]

Poets and their patrons, naturally enough, put their own gloss upon things. For them plunder was taxation, the taxation rightfully exacted by the conqueror of the world.

I have mentioned the pun in *bhūbhṛta*, (‹'king'›/‹'mountain'›). In particular kings are often compared to Mount Meru. the

[32] S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (Glencoe, 1963), p. 91.

[33] Ibid., p. 117.

[34] Cf. Basham, *Ancient Indian Culture*, pp. 26 ff.

[35] George W. Spencer, 'The Politics of Plunder: The Cholas in Eleventh Century Ceylon', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 1976 p. 406.

mountain at the centre of the world.[36] Thus in *Kādambarī* King Śūdraka is said to resemble Meru in that all the worlds live in the shadow of his feet.[37] Each king, in so far as he was supporter of the earth, was considered to be its unique supporter. Every king was, conceptually speaking, at the centre of the world, marching victoriously to each of the cardinal points. It might be that this wish for universal dominion sprang from a memory of former empires such as that of Aśoka; be that as it may, impossibly many kings were credited with world conquest by their willing poets. It was essentially a magical view of the world, devoid of military feasibility.

The classic statement of the *digvijaya*, 'conquest of the quarters', is the fourth *sarga* of the *Raghuvaṃśa*. I will mention a few points of interest. The rain motif is prevalent. 'Indra put down the rainbow; Raghu seized the victorious bow,'[38] both acting for the welfare of the people (4.16). Contrary to the clearing of the waters in the autumn, the minds of Raghu's foes became confused and agitated (4.21). His elephants looked like clouds (4.29). Not only did he make forests offer an open way, he made water spring up in deserts (4.31). His army looked like Gaṅgā—'Leading his vast army towards the eastern sea, he looked like Bhagīratha dragging Gaṅgā while it fell from the matted hair of Hara' (4.32).[39] Like a river in spate, he uprooted those who did not bow before him (4.35). Advancing to the west he was like the sea surging up to Mount Sahya (4.53). The king is also fiery like the sun. Though with his equitable administration of justice, 'like the south wind, he was neither too hot, nor too cold'[40] (4.8), yet when autumn comes,

> Rainless and light clouds cleared the path for the irresistible valour of the king and the unendurable radiance of the sun, which simultaneously began to invade the directions. (4.15)[41]

[36] Cf. G. Bühler, 'The Indian Inscriptions and the Antiquity of Indian Artificial Poetry', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XLII, 1913; reprinted, Bombay, 1913, p. 31.

[37] *Kādambarī* ed. Peterson, p. 5, line 11: merur iva sakalabhuvanopajīvyamānapādacchāyaḥ. Bühler gives further examples: see 'Indian Artificial Poetry'.

[38] *Raghuvaṃśa* (trans. Antoine, p. 47): vārṣikaṃ saṃjahārendro dhanur jaitraṃ raghur dadhau/...

[39] Ibid., p. 49: sa senāṃ mahatīṃ karṣan pūrvasāgaragāminīm/
babhau harajaṭābhraṣṭāṃ gaṅgām iva bhagīrathaḥ//

[40] Ibid., p. 47: nātiśītoṣṇo nabhasvān iva dakṣiṇaḥ//

[41] Ibid.: nirvṛṣṭalaghubhir meghair muktavartmā suduḥsahaḥ/
pratāpas tasya bhānoś ca yugapad vyānaśe diśaḥ//

Raghu's splendour, unlike the sun's, was not dimmed in the south (4.49). 'Then, like the sun, Raghu set out for Kuvera's quarter, the North: his purpose was to extirpate with his arrows the Northern people, as the sun draws up the waters with its rays.' (4.66)[42] The other half of this cycle here only passingly referred to is mentioned later:

> He performed the Viśvajit sacrifice in which one's entire wealth is offered; for the just, like the clouds, gather in order to give. (4.86)[43]

Raghu exacts tribute from those who surrender, and plunders and slays those who do not; but gives everything away, keeping the resources flowing; becoming himself emperor, whose feet it is a favour to touch (4.88).

If the aim of world-conquest made respectable, and even sanctified, raiding and banditry, it must be conceded that reality is hard to find. The view of kingship we have been considering is just one aspect of that Hindu ideology in which all of ancient India known to us is hermetically sealed. Indian texts are almost entirely ideal in their view of the world, or rather it is their intention to be so.

Keith has this to say of the world-view of Sanskrit poets:

> They live ... in a world of tranquil calm, not in the sense that sorrow and suffering are unknown, but in the sense that there prevails a rational order in the world which is the outcome not of blind chance but of the actions of man in previous births. Discontent with the constitution of the universe, rebellion against its decrees, are incompatible with the serenity engendered by this recognition by all the Brahminical poets of the rationality of the world order. Hence we can trace no echo of social discontent; the poets were courtiers who saw nothing whatever unsatisfactory in the life around them.[44]

This assessment is familiar to every English-speaking reader of *kāvya*. Keith goes on to say that the poets were not much moved

[42] Ibid., p. 53:
tataḥ pratasthe kauberīṃ bhāsvān iva raghur diśam/
śarair usrair ivodīcyānuddhariṣyan rasān iva//
Note the pun in *uddhariṣyan*: '‹to extirpate›/‹to draw up›'.

[43] Ibid., p. 55:
sa viśvajitam ājahre yajñaṃ sarvasvadakṣiṇam/
ādānaṃ hi visargāya satāṃ vārimucām iva//

[44] *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 345.

by patriotism—'the clashes between neighbouring kings appeared to them in the light of the normal occupation of the warrior class.'[45]

It is not necessarily true that the rational order of karma induces tranquillity. Reincarnation plays no part in *mahākāvya*; in the story literature it goes hand in hand with a feverish romanticism. The attitudes to kings mentioned above are serene but can hardly be called rational. And when Keith declares that the poets 'saw nothing whatsoever unsatisfactory in the life around them', I would suggest that he is combining two separate things, literature and life. It is profoundly true that *kāvya* sought to engender serenity. It sought to do so not by any recognition of rationality but by a variety of stylistic and other means, to be discussed throughout the remainder of this study. In so far as *kāvya* appears as 'a world of tranquil calm' it may be just because there was a great deal that was 'unsatisfactory' in the lives of courtiers. 'Clashes' were 'the normal occupation of the warrior class'—this cannot but have been inconvenient for the courtiers, where they survived.

In many ways, as for us, the world was neither rational nor ideal. One role of culture is to remedy this condition. Consider this instance of wishful thinking on the part of Śaṅkara:

> What for us is imperceptible was perceptible for the ancients; thus it is recorded that Vyāsa and others used to meet the Gods face to face. But if some would assert that, as for those now living so for the ancients also it was impossible to meet with gods and the like, they would deny the variety of the world; they might also maintain that, as at the present, so also in other times, there was no world-swaying prince (*sārvabhaumaḥ kṣatriyaḥ*) and thus they would not acknowledge the injunctions referring to the consecration of kings; they might further assume that, as at present, so also in other times, the duties of castes and Āśramas had no stable rules, and thus treat as vain the canon of law which provides rules for them. We must therefore believe that the ancients, in consequence of pre-eminent merits, held visible converse with the Gods ...[46]

Here we see Śaṅkara struggling against what his common sense told him. The nearer Kalhaṇa gets to his own day in his history

[45] Ibid.

[46] Śaṅkarabhāṣya ad Brahmasūtra 1.3.33, trans. P. Deussen, *The System of the Vedanta* (Chicago, 1912), p. 38.

of the kings of Kashmir, the more he finds that is repugnant to him. It is only the latest king in the *Raghuvaṃśa* who is dissolute. *Kāvya* has an important part to play in this fight against the unpleasantness in life. In most obvious terms, the demon is always slain in *mahākāvya*.

As it happens, the lure of the *digvijaya* was a potent cause of disorder. The cosmic pattern was inappropriate for the human scene. In an essay which sets out to explain the absence of empire in post-Gupta Hindu India, Professor Derrett lays bare the historical consequences of the ritual and theoretical assumption of world conquest. The Indian belief was that 'public security ... required a bellicose king and the positive rather than a negative attitude towards empire building.'[47] It was commonly held 'that empires were better than kingdoms, and nobody doubted but that a non-expansionist-ruler was a weak one, who was about to forfeit his and his family's title.'[48]

> It was a feature of Indian imperialism that the conquered rulers were deprived of their kingdoms, and then *reinstated* as 'feudatories'. This process was apparently mild and benevolent and likely to avoid desperate jealousies at the edges of the empire, but it operated to the empire's disadvantage.[49]

(Note that rulers were allowed to remain because the sole practical purpose of empire was to gather in revenue; not to govern according to a central pattern—governors were not appointed.) Since the essential machinery of empire was the inflowing of wealth to the king and his outpouring of it to those he favoured, everything centred on the 'emperor':

> the characteristic Indian situation was of a pyramid of dependence, the topmost individual depending upon all his immediate subjects for his income, but with all of them dependent upon him for their own progress, security, and general welfare. The king in turn depended upon the [subsidiary] rulers for his income and troops, and they depended on him for the security and prosperity of the empire.[50]

Derrett lays great stress on this 'highly personal aspect of empire'.[51] The business of empire is conducted not by rules and laws, but by favour:

[47] J. Duncan. M. Derrett, 'Hindu Empires', in *Les Grande Empires. Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, Vol. 31, 1973, pp. 565–96.

[48] Ibid., p. 572. [49] Ibid., p. 573. [50] Ibid., p. 586. [51] Ibid., p. 584.

> Those who have any kind of official position believe that they do others a favour for doing what in the rest of the world [i.e. outside India; but, *pace* Derrett, such a tendency is not unique to India] is regarded as a duty. This is because of the ancient hieratic and superstitious concept of rule and the ruler's position. The ruler also has his duty, but his role and function is of enjoyment. The ruler's duty to protect the subjects cannot be visualised as a duty towards any particular subject in any particular situation.[52]

Power is personal and arbitrary.

> All subjects adopt a toadying attitude towards officials. Toadyism and sycophancy run throughout the system. If money is to be paid out this may not be completed unless pressure is placed on the payer, or he is induced to concede payment as a favour—for which some reciprocity is naturally required ... .[53]

> From top to bottom of the chain runs the thread of personal dependence and the search for prestige. Support could not be obtained except upon terms. ... nothing but transient self-interes held people together beyond the level of the family, and even families broke up under the strain of the temptations of empire. The state was in constant flux which only a few highly talented individuals were able to keep in relative check.[54]

Bearing all this in mind, the practical importance of panegyric becomes apparent. Fulsome praise is the basic idiom of such societies. Nor is sycophancy an altogether satisfactory term to describe the discourse of inferior to superior. The inherently unstable power system surely calls forth devout wishes for its success, except of course from those who wish themselves to become emperor; the poet, like everyone else, has good reason to wish to 'strengthen' the king.

Perhaps the most debatable part of Derrett's thesis is the emphasis he lays on Indian feelings of insecurity—'Insecurity is thus the mother of empires in India and also their end.'[55]

> The insecurity of the Indian mind is, and obviously was, its predominant feature. Life in the joint family deprived every individual of a trust or belief in the stability of any person. Hence the great interest in otherworldly values, in 'merit', and in escape from the apparently endless flux of existence. ... The natural search for security went on ceaselessly.[56]

[52] Ibid., p. 586. [53] Ibid. [54] Ibid., p. 588. [55] Ibid., p. 589.
[56] Ibid., p. 587.

How far this judgement is correct I cannot say,[57] but it certainly bears out my own impressions with regard to kāvya: that is to say, that the 'tranquil calm' of *kāvya* is the product of art, rather than the direct reflection of daily life. To a large extent, serenity was urgently needed and was savoured in art by courtiers whose insecurity was endemic.

Those who openly assuaged this insecurity and anxiety, who in other words did most to strengthen the king, were not the poets, but the bards. The bards were professionals who worked constantly, from dawn to dusk and even later; the poets were amateurs, working occasionally and competitively.

> An essential feature of the royal household was the bards, who sang the ruler's panegyrics and those of his ancestors, by which they strengthened his power to perform his royal duties. The contents of the panegyrics which are considered as historical truth have the effect of a magical performance, causing the exploits to spread their inherent power and to become active again in the person of the listener.[58]

A few hymns of the Ṛgveda explicitly mention this power of praise to strengthen. The Rudras are spoken of as 'Singing their song and generating the might of Indra';[59] and so too the *ṛṣis*: 'when ye sang aloud the Śakvarī verses, Vasiṣṭhas! ye invigorated Indra.'[60] But it is not altogether necessary to think in terms of magic, as does Gonda in this passage. For instance, in Act 5 of *Śakuntala* the king is quickly revived by his bards. He walks on 'with the air of one oppressed by the cares of government',[61] and remarks on his weariness:

> ... Ceaseless toil
> Must be the lot of him who with his hands
> Supports the canopy that shields his subjects.[62]

[57] In support of Derrett, cf. G. Morris Carstairs, *The Twice-born* (London, 1957); also G. M. Carstairs and R. L. Kapur, *The Great Universe of Kota* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976).
[58] Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship*, p. 46.

[59] ṚV 1.88.2 trans. A. A. Macdonell, *A Vedic Reader* (Oxford, 1917), 23: arcanto arkaṃ janayanta indriyam.

[60] ṚV 7.33.4 trans. Ralph, T. H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the Ṛgveda*, 4th edn. (Varanasi, 1963), p. 35): yac chakvarīṣu bṛhatā ravendre suṣmam adadhātā vasiṣṭhāḥ.

[61] adhikārakhedaṃ nirūpya. Trans. Monier Monier-Williams, *Śakoontalā*, 8th edn. revised (London and New York n.d.), p. 112.

[62] *Śākuntala*, ed. Deodhar and Suru (Poona, 1934), p. 134–56 (trans. Monier-Williams, p. 113):

nātiśramāpanayanāya yathā śramāya
rājyaṃ svahastadhṛtadaṇḍam ivātapatram//

Forthwith, two bards behind the scenes extol their monarch who then declares,

> Weary as I was before, this complimentary address has refreshed me.[63]

The duties of the bard were multifarious, though we lack detailed information. The *Mahābhārata* itself was, of course, originally (and largely remains) the work of bards. The bard of a king would recite his genealogy, enlarge upon the fame of his ancestors, and spur on his patron to new deeds of valour. Bards had also the more prosaic role of announcing in verse the periods of the day; they also offered ad hoc praise throughout the day, thus providing the king at all times with a sympathetic and encouraging environment. Various words for 'bard' refer to differing function, but it is not possible to say how far a particular individual would specialize. Certain words for 'bard' signify 'praiser': *stutipāṭhaka, bandin,* and *maṅgalapāṭhaka* ('blessing-reciter'); *vaitālika* is more specific: 'one who measures out time'; even more so *saukhaśāyika*, 'one who asks another whether he has slept well', a bard who wakes the king in the morning. Śiva is woken by *saukhaśāyikas* at the beginning of *sarga* 29 in the *Haravijaya*.

In the drama verses are often recited or sung by bards, naturally enough since kings and courts figure largely there. In *mahākāvya* their presence is limited to that of awaking, as just mentioned of Ratnākara's poem.[64] There is usually no difference in style between poets' verses and those they attribute to bards.[65] How far the effusions of the bard really differed from those of *kavis*, it is impossible to say. His status was clearly far lower; as we have seen poets were often ministers and were highly honoured. According to the *Arthaśāstra*, the bard was regularly

[63] *Śākuntala*, ed. Deodhar and Sūru, p. 134 (trans. Monier-Williams, p. 114): ete klāntamanasaḥ punar navīkṛtāḥ smaḥ.

[64] As in *Raghuvaṃśa* 5.66–74; *Śiśupālavadha* 11; and *Naiṣadhacarita* 19.

[65] They may be even higher poetry, according to one authority: 'It may be unhesitatingly stated that in the works of Kālidāsa, highlights and rare specimens of poetical craftsmanship are placed in the mouth of these bards. Conspicuous among these is the glorious poetical effusion poured out by the bards to wake up the prince Aja on the morn of the Svayaṃvara day of the princess Indumatī. There is a tradition that these ten verses were composed by Goddess Sarasvatī herself and presented to Kālidāsa...' S. A. Sabnis, *Kālidāsa: His Style and His Times* (Bombay, 1966, pp. 213 ff.

paid, ranking in Kauṭilya's schema equal with dons and various inspectors at the bottom of the court scale.[66]

On the evidence of drama, bards produced only one or two verses at a time; but we know from the epics and from later history, as in the case of the Rajputs, that certain bards were repositories of genealogical lore. It may be that in this respect poets replaced bards where there was a lack of family history. Herman Goetz suggested that there was a fundamental change between Gupta and post-Gupta times, the former being 'secular, mixed aristocratic-capitalistic' centred in the city, the latter 'aristocratic-theocratic' centred in the palace-temple; and he compares the change to that undergone by the later Roman Empire.[67]

> The aristocracy became an exclusive caste, claiming as their ancestors not merely the old Kṣatriya class, but a few famous kings and heroes of the *Mahābhārata* and *Purāṇas*. They were divided into Sūryavaṃśīs (descendants from the sun), Candravaṃśīs (descendants from the moon) and Agnivaṃśīs (descendants from a magic fire by the saint Vasiṣṭha in order to ward off the *asuras*). The overwhelming majority of these claims were fictitious and at first vague and often contradictory, as most of the claimants had been soldiers of fortune, even barbarians and jungle tribesmen. But the claims were acknowledged by the priestly class, bribed by rich endowments to temples and monasteries, and were enforced by a systematic arrogant exclusiveness.[68]

Perhaps the change was not so great—the theocratic view of the king obtains in the *Brāhmaṇas*, to say nothing of later times; but whether or not the change was extreme, Goetz's picture gives a key to one role of *kāvya*. By *kāvya* new monarchs, lacking hereditary history and hereditary bards, were given instant credentials, at one and the same time vague and universal. The bard was authentic, the poet inauthentic.[69]

The poet resembled the bard (genealogist, cheer-leader,

[66] See Jeannine Auboyer, *La Vie Quotidienne dans l'Inde Ancienne* (Paris, 1961), p. 149.

[67] Hermann Goetz, *India: Five Thousand Years of Indian Art*, 2nd ed. (London, 1964), p. 138.

[68] Ibid.

[69] The one is firmly in this world, the other is not. Tod may compare the bards of his own day with the Belgic genealogist of Gibbon who 'riots in all the lust of fiction, and spins from his own bowels a lineage of some thousands of years' (see W. Crooke, s.v. 'Bhāṭ, Chāraṇ' in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (London 1908–21), Vol. 2, p. 553); nevertheless authenticity is what is aimed at by the bard.

time-keeper) in that he too promoted the psychic health of the king. There was, however, a fundamental difference. The poet's verse had, of course, an independent *raison d'être*: it was an art form, and the king's name was joined to this already existent entity, in the case of poems with historical themes. The role of poetry, as of art in general in India, was that of creating a new ideal universe, mirroring not so much the world as heaven. Whereas the bard fostered and strengthened the king, so to speak, the poet fostered and strengthened a whole new world of his imagining, in which the king could be included.

Nevertheless, despite the distinction which must necessarily be drawn between poet and bard, panegyric is an important element in *kāvya*. The great poet Bāṇa gives an account of his visit to the Emperor Harṣa which exemplifies the panegyrical vein so natural to *kāvya*. I shall examine this account; we may note at the same time that Ratnākara claims to be a second Bāṇa (a somewhat mysterious assertion, to be examined in the next chapter of this study).

At the beginning of the *Harṣacarita*, after an account of his own ancestry, Bāṇa tells how, after some years misspent, he is summoned to the presence of the Emperor. A little light is here thrown on the status of bards, for he tells us that the companions of his dissolute youth included two panegyrists (*vandin*), as well as a Prākṛt poet of noble birth, a descriptive poet (*varṇakavi*),[70] and Bāṇa's dear friend, a vernacular poet. 'With these and others for his companions ... he brought himself into the derision of the great.'[71] Yet these people were not bad in themselves, for having regained the sage state of mind proper to his family and visited the Emperor Harṣa, we find that he is still acquainted with at least two of his companions in folly: Sudṛṣṭi and Sūcīvāṇa. While Sudṛṣṭi the reader is chanting from the *Vāyupurāṇa*, 'the minstrel Sūcīvāṇa, who was not far from him, accompanied the modulation of the chant by reciting in a voice loud and sweet this *āryā* couplet':

> Itself sung by sages,
> ‹itself widespread›/‹surpassing Pṛthu (the primaeval king)›,

[70] Or a panegyrist?

[71] *Harṣacarita*, ed. P. V. Kane, 2nd ed. (Delhi, 1965), *ucchvāsa* 1, p. 19, lines 25–8 (trans. E. B. Cowell and F. W. Thomas, *The Harṣa-Carita of Bāṇa*, reprint (Delhi, 1961), p. 33): sa etaiś cānyaiś cānugamyamāno ... agāc ... mahatām upahāsyatām.

embracing the world,
cleansing from sin,
methinks this Purāṇa differs not from the achievements of Harṣa!

Following ‹the sound of the flute›/‹the law of heredity›,
free from discord,
noised abroad ‹with clear rhythm›/‹by its deeds›,
‹worthily following Bharata's rules›/‹including all India under its sway›,
issuing from ‹a sweet throat›/‹the kingdom of Śrīkaṇṭha›,
this chant resembles the sovereignty of Harṣa.[72]

Here we have not only the punning beloved of *kavis*, but also praise directed at Bāṇa, for there is a third level of punning, the 'achievements of Harṣa', *Harṣacarita*, being the title of Bāṇa's book. The bard's verse prefigures the recital by Bāṇa of the remaining chapters of the book; and thus, as so often with the utterance of bards in plays, is prophetic. In this, bards seem to retain something of their mantic function, prevalent elsewhere in the Indo-European tradition, and evidenced by the far-sightedness of Sañjaya in the *Mahābhārata*, and perhaps also by the apotheosis of bards in the case of Nārada, and the Cāraṇas (celestial bards).

Bāṇa elaborately builds up to his audience with Harṣa, which is as brief as the approach to it is long. Bāṇa arrives at the imperial camp, to find it thronged by the camps of subject kings, dark with crowds of elephants, turbulent with plunging horses, tawny with camels, white with umbrellas and chowries, filled with conquered kings and visiting kings—its glory could not be described in hundreds of *Mahābhāratas* (though Bāṇa seems successful). Following an impressive description of the principal doorkeeper:

gleaming with two jewelled ear-rings at his ear, as if they were the sun and moon brought to be asked whether even a king of the solar

[72] *Ucchvāsa* 3, ed. Kane, p. 39, lines 23–8 (trans. Cowell and Thomas, p. 73, with modifications): nātidūravartī bandī sūcībāṇas tāramadhureṇa gītidhvanim anuvartamānaḥ svareṇedam āryāyugalam apāṭhat —

tad api munigītam atipṛthu tad api jagadvyāpi pāvanaṃ tad api/
harṣacaritād abhinnaṃ pratibhāti hi me purāṇam idam//
vaṃśānugam avivādi sphuṭakaraṇaṃ bharatamārgabhajanaguru/
śrīkaṇṭhaviniryātaṃ gītam idaṃ harṣarājyam iva//

(This is the metre usually used by bards cited in *kāvya*.)

> or lunar race were such as our king?—while the sunbeams seemed to give place to him through respect for his office.[73]

Bāṇa is shown the king's favourite horses, and then at his special request the king's favourite elephant, which he describes at length. The relationship between king and elephant is particularly close: 'his external heart, his very self in another birth, his vital airs gone outside from him'.[74] The elephant is symbol of matchless power and strength. Naturally compared to a mountain and hence to the world itself, it is inherently associated with the 'supporter of the earth' whose title also means 'mountain', and who is the natural centre of the world. Above all, the elephant is manifest might:

> He moved restlessly with pride, he snorted with repressed energy, he swelled with intoxication, he staggered with youth, he flowed freely with ichor, he leaped about with conscious strength, he was drunk with arrogance, he seemed to be ever seeking the highest place with ambition.[75]

From this emblem of the king's strength, Bāṇa is hurried through three courts crowded with subject-kings to the king himself. The description of Harṣa takes some 116 lines of text in Kane's edition. To pick out only the choicest encomia—Harṣa is 'an avatāra of all the gods united in one';[76] he is 'the source of the creation of the Gods'.[77]

> He was like a jewel mountain, with its outstretched wings of jewels, spread on both sides,—with the red rays of the bracelets as if they were the paths for the passage of the glory produced by his arm ...

[73] *Ucchvāsa* 2, ed. Kane, p. 28, lines 17–20 (trans. Cowell and Thomas, p. 49): 'kathayataṃ yadi somavaṃśasambhavaḥ sūryavaṃśasambhavo vā bhūpatir evaṃvidhaḥ' iti praṣṭum ānītābhyāṃ somasūryābhyāṃ iva śravaṇagatābhyāṃ maṇikuṇḍalābhyāṃ samudbhāsamānena, ... adhikāragauravād dīyamānamārgeṇeva dinakṛtaḥ kiraṇaiḥ .... Cf. my remarks above about authenticity.

[74] Ibid., p. 29, line 20, p. 51: bāhyaṃ hṛdayaṃ jātyantarita ātmā bahiścarāḥ prāṇā ....

[75] Ibid., p. 31, lines 1–3 (trans. p. 54): calantam iva darpeṇa śvasantam iva śauryeṇa, mūrcchantam iva madena, truṭyantam iva tāruṇyena, dravantam iva dānena, valgantam iva balena, mādyantam iva mānena, udyantam ivotsāhena ....

[76] Ibid., p. 32, line 32 (trans. p. 58): sarvadevatāvatāram ivaikatra darśayantam... .

[77] Ibid., p. 35, line 8 (trans. p. 63): bījam iva vibudhasargasya ... As Kane notes, there is a pun here: ‹gods›/‹wise men›—he encouraged learned men.

or as if they were other arms newly budding forth in rivalry of Viṣṇu's four arms ... .[78]

The king described, Bāṇa graphically portrays his own state of mind:

Feeling, as it were, at once welcomed and checked, full of desire and yet satisfied, with his face hooripilated with awe, and with tears of joy falling from his eyes, he stood at a distance smiling in wonder ... .[79]

We are then treated to a further rhapsody in the form of Bāṇa's thoughts, where Harṣa is favourably compared to the various gods in a section concluding, 'Wonderful is his royalty, surpassing the gods!'[80]

It is important to reflect upon the nature of such sentiments. I have already discussed what in Gonda's terms is the magical aspect of the king, that to praise the king is to bring about the general good. Dasgupta stresses the sincerity of the admiration felt for kings:

Though many panegyric verses in literature may have as their aim the flattery of kings for personal gain, yet judging from the general relation between the king and his subjects it can hardly be doubted that in most cases there was a real and genuine feeling of sincere admiration and love for the king. This also gives us the reason why royal characters were treated in *kāvya* side by side with the characters of gods, for the king was god on earth not by his force or his power of tyranny but through love and admiration that was spontaneous about him on the part of the subjects.[81]

When summoned to the king, Bāṇa was reluctant to go, taking the view that 'all service is hateful, and attendance is full of evils, and a court is full of dangers';[82] but, it seems, sight of

[78] Ibid., p. 33, lines 23–6 (trans. p. 60): ajajigīṣayā bālair bhujair ivāparaiḥ prarohadbhir . . . bhujajanmanaḥ pratāpasya nirgamanamārgair ivāvirbhavadbhir aruṇaiḥ keyūraratnakiraṇadaṇḍair ubhayataḥ prasāritamaṇimayapakṣavitānam iva māṇikyamahīdharam.... Mountains used to have wings, until they were clipped by Indra. See below, pp. 279 ff.

[79] Ibid., p. 35, lines 18 and 19 (trans. p. 64): anugṛhīta iva nigṛhīta iva sābhilāṣa iva tṛpta iva romāñcamucā mukhena muñcann ānandabāṣpavāribindūn dūrād eva vismayasmeraḥ ....

[80] Ibid., p. 35, line 27 (trans. p. 65): citram idam atyamaraṃ rājatvam.

[81] S. N. Dasgupta in Dasgupta and De, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. xcix.

[82] *Ucchvāsa* 2, ed. Kane, p. 25, lines 17 and 18 (trans. p. 44): kaṣṭā ca sevā. viṣamaṃ ca bhṛtyatvam. atigambhīraṃ mahad rājakulam.

the king and his court was sufficient to fill him with the highest enthusiasm.

Bāṇa also tells us of the attitude of the *Harṣacarita's* first audience. His cousins declare:

> We are eager to hear from the beginning onwards in the order of his lineage the fortunes of this auspiciously named hero, rich in the merit won by noble deeds. ... As the magnet attracts hard and sapless iron, so do the qualities of the great even the hard and tasteless minds of insignificant people: much more those of others naturally tasteful and susceptible ... Let our Bhṛgu race become even more pure by the purificatory hearing of the deeds of the royal sage.[83]

A similarly high value is placed on hearing praise of a king in Bāṇa's other work, *Kādambarī*:

> The people listened to his deeds, as one listens to congratulatory words; received them as instruction from a preceptor; thought highly of them, as one does of auspicious things; repeated them with reverence as one repeats mantras; and never forgot them, as one never forgets the holy Vedic texts ... .[84]

Note the Vedic and general religious parallels drawn in this series of similes. Panegyric is inherently religious discourse, for it is directed towards ideal supernormal entities. The king is not loved as a human personality, but for his superhuman symbolism. This is no doubt obvious enough, and there must be universal parallels.

Yet Bāṇa himself is aware that what he says about the king is not true and is even dangerous! I propose reconstructing Bāṇa's personal history as follows. His summons to the court comes from a brother or cousin of the king, who 'without any reason'[85] is tenderly affected with a firm love towards Bāṇa, 'just as the

[83] *Ucchvāsa* 3, ed. Kane, p. 40, line 30–p. 41, line 4 (trans. Cowell and Thomas), pp. 76 ff: asya sugṛhītanāmnaḥ puṇyarāśeḥ pūrvapuruṣavaṃśānukrameṇāditaḥ prabhṛti caritam icchāmaḥ śrotum.... ayaskāntamaṇaya iva lohāni nīrasaniṣṭhurāṇi kṣullakānām apy ākarṣanti manāṃsi mahatāṃ guṇāḥ, kim uta svabhāvasarasamṛdūnītareṣām. ... bhavatu bhārgavo'yaṃ vaṃśaḥ śucinānena rājarṣicaritaśravaṇena sutarāṃ śucitaraḥ.

[84] *Kādambarī* (Pūrvabhāga), ed. trans. M. R. Kale, 4th rev. ed. (Delhi, 1968), trans. pp. 77 ff; text p. 95, lines 5–7; yasya diṣṭivṛddhim iva śuśrāvopadeśam iva jagrāha maṅgalam iva bahu mene mantram iva jajāpāgamavacanam iva na visasmāra caritaṃ janaḥ.

[85] *Ucchvāsa* 2, ed. Kane, p. 24, line 11 (trans. Cowell and Thomas, p. 41): vinā kāraṇena.

moon feels towards the lotus-bud, however distant it may be',[86] and informs Bāṇa that the king is displeased at reports of Bāṇa's levity. But as Bāṇa himself says, neither he nor his family have ever had any connection with the court. Why then should the king or his cousin Kṛṣṇa pay attention to this obscure Brahman? I suggest that Bāṇa was not obscure, that he was a well-known poet, like several of his friends, especially through his travels which, Bāṇa says, included visits to great courts 'charming the mind with their noble routine';[87] and that by far the most likely reason for Harṣa's being displeased with Bāṇa was that Bāṇa had not written in praise of him.[88]

It is true that Bāṇa several times refers to his youthful follies, but when he is about to leave the court, resolved 'so to act that he may recognize me in time in my real character' he reproves himself for thinking ill of the king: 'Shame on me thus blinded in my mind by my own faults, and crushed by neglect,—that I venture to indulge in various fancies concerning this most excellent monarch.'[89] He returns to the court after a few days, is received with honour and shares in the king's wealth, having, we may well believe, either agreed to write the *Harṣacarita* or actually started upon it.

But what were the various follies Bāṇa had previously indulged in? If the *Kādambarī* preceded the *Harṣacarita*, it might be this very passage (or, at any rate, this kind of attitude) which constituted thinking ill of the king:

> [The Brahman minister Śukanāsa counsels Prince Candrāpīḍa] Thus are kings deceived with more than mortal praises by men ready to raise faults to the grade of virtues, practised in deception, laughing in their hearts, utterly villainous; and thus these monarchs, by reason of their senselessness have their minds intoxicated by the pride of wealth, and have a settled false conceit in them that these things are really so; though subject to mortal

[86] Ibid., lines 12 and 13: dūrasthe'pīndor iva kumudākare.

[87] Ibid., p. 19, lines 29 and 30 (trans. p. 33): udāravyavahṛtimanohṛnti bṛhanti rājakulāni vīkṣamāṇaḥ. (Kane's text has -vyavahṛtir mano-; he gives the other reading in a note.)

[88] Harṣa clearly says, according to one reading, na tāvad enam akṛtaprasādaṃ paśyāmi, 'I will not see him yet, as he has not yet offered his tribute of respect' (trans. p. 66). Kane, *Ucchvāsa* 2, p. 36, line 6, has 'akṛtaprasādaḥ'.

[89] *Ucchvāsa* 2, ed. Kane, p. 37, lines 25–8 (trans. p. 69): dhiṅ māṃ svadoṣāndhamānasam anādarapīḍitam evam atiguṇavati rājany anyathā cānyathā ca cintayantam.

> conditions, they look on themselves as having alighted on earth as divine beings with a superhuman destiny; they employ a pomp in their undertakings only fit for gods and win the contempt of all mankind. They welcome this deception of themselves by their followers. From the delusion as to their own divinity established in their minds, they are overthrown by false ideas, and they think their own pair of arms have received another pair; they imagine their forehead has a third eye buried in the skin. They consider the sight of themselves a favour; they esteem their glance a benefit; they regard their words as a present; they hold their command a glorious boon; they deem their touch a purification.[90]

This contrasts directly with the praise of Harṣa, who is indeed said to have extra arms like Viṣṇu. Writing in this vein was certain to put Harṣa out of countenance with Bāṇa. Considered more generally, this passage seems a convincing description of the ideology of the court from a Brahman's unsympathetic perspective. However, the satire here is clearly a stylized example of its genre, and is no more natural than is panegyric; it is merely the other side of the coin. Bāṇa is an outstanding example of a panegyrist, in respect of the historical Harṣa in one work, and of the fictional Tārāpīḍa and Śūdraka in the other.

Bāṇa's panegyric is not restricted to kings. His predominant tone is that of enthusiastic eulogy, as we have seen in the case of Harṣa's favourite elephant. Here Bāṇa brings to the fore an attitude implicit in all *kāvya*. This discussion started from Ingalls' insight into panegyric: in its intention panegyric is parallel to ritual. Ritual (in so far as it has to do with kings) usually explicitly, panegyric usually implicitly, both desire to strengthen the king. More generally, *kāvya* desires to strengthen all the good things of life. In addition to the broad parallel drawn with

[90] *Kādambarī*, ed. P. L. Vaidya (Poona, 1951), lines 6–17 (trans. C. M. Ridding, *Bāṇabhaṭṭa's Kādambarī*, 2nd ed. Bombay 1956, p. 95): doṣān api guṇapakṣam adhyāropayadbhir antaḥ svayam api vihasadbhiḥ pratāraṇakuśalair dhūrtair amānuṣocitābhiḥ stutibhiḥ pratāryamāṇāḥ vittamadamattacittā niścetanatayātathaivety ātmany āropitālīkābhimānā martyadharmāṇo'pi divyāṃśāvatīrṇam iva sadaivatam ivātimānuṣam ātmānam utprekṣamāṇāḥ prārabdhadivyocitaceṣṭānubhāvāḥ sarvajanasyopahāsyatām upayānti. ātmaviḍambanāṃ cānujīvinā janena kriyamāṇām abhinandanti. manasā devatādhyāropaṇapratāraṇād asadbhūtasaṃbhāvanopahatāś cāntaḥpraviṣṭāparabhujadvayam ivātmabāhuyugalaṃ saṃbhāvayanti tvagantaritatṛtīyalocanaṃ svalalāṭam āśaṅkante. darśanapradānam apy anugrahaṃ gaṇayanti. dṛṣṭipātam apy upakārapakṣe sthāpayanti. saṃbhāṣaṇam api saṃvibhāgamadhye kurvanti. ājñām api varapradānaṃ manyante. sparśam api pāvanam ākalayanti.

ritual, Ingalls says that the form of panegyric is 'ritualized'. He mentions in this respect only the 'impersonality' of Indian panegyric: 'panegyrics were so ritualized in India that they had become impersonal.' If panegyric underlies *kāvya*, so does ritual.

The ritual element of *kāvya*, which is in brief its formalism and repetition of a limited number of basic images, has been noted by Gonda:

> The strikingly stereotyped features of these portraits [of the gods' persons and outward appearances] which are in essential harmony with the ritual and iconographical handbooks, may not be regarded as evidence of poverty of ideas on the part of the authors, but rather as a token that they understood very well what. from the religious point of view, was essential and that they attached much value to the commemoration and confirmation of the divine qualities and power through the medium of literature. ... any commemoration of the divine person may be a little help to attain final emancipation.[91]

And likewise with the gods' deeds:

> A reference to the gods' victory may ... serve to celebrate, confirm and consolidate his omnipotence and absolute superiority: 'What was the purpose of drum-beating when you wanted to burn up the Three Cities, which were no more than grass to you?' However, the repetition *hic et nunc* of God's mythical exploit does not fail deeply to affect our own lives. God will continue to destroy all our sins and distress as his arrow burnt away Tripura; 'Praise to the victor of the Triple City, to the slayer of the sins of man.' The practical effect is that the story of destruction becomes not only praise and fortification of the god who destroys our sins and evil, but also a promise of his help in the future ... .[92]

It may further be said that virtually all the images employed in *kāvya* are strikingly stereotyped and that the general tendency of *kāvya* is towards celebration, confirmation and consolidation. The irregular and shifting world is fixed, is given ballast by the orderliness of *kāvya*.

This point has been made brilliantly about a form of Arabic poetry by Hamori, who manages at the same time to make most illuminating references to Sanskrit. Discussing 'the extreme conventionality, repetitiousness, and thematic limitations of

[91] J. Gonda, *Viṣṇuism and Śivaism* (London, 1970), pp. 123 ff.
[92] Ibid., p. 126.

the *qaṣīda*' (qualities very much shared by *kāvya*), Hamori explains that

> already in the sixth century, before the coming of Islam, these poems, rather than myths or religious rituals, served as the vehicle for the conception that sorted out the emotionally incoherent facts of life and death, and by the sorting set them at the bearable remove of contemplation.[93]

Sorting out is clearly what *mahākāvya* does with the facts of life and death, though it also makes use of myth, having first adapted it. Hamori finds a ritual quality in the *qaṣīda*. 'We are dealing with a particular type of ritual: it aims at affirmation, and not at effecting a change, such as stopping a toothache or a drought.'[94] It is this function, which he terms 'quasi-ritualistic', that accounts for the frequent occurrence of 'crowded descriptive passages'. It is here that Hamori's analysis is particularly interesting and helpful to us, however different in other respects Arabic and Sanskirt poetry may be. He notes that the descriptions are static, exhaustive, and predictable.

> (A) A detailed description is static in the absence of action, and it remains static if it includes only such actions as serve to embody a quality that is being described. ... Static description—the temporary suppression of transitive action on the object's part—turns the public not into a witness (which it is in classical literature) but into a participant. It does not necessarily reduce its object into something possible. In the Indian *Saundaryalahari*, the goddess Devi is described statically, catalogue style; but in her presence the public takes up a devotional attitude. Provisionally, let us say that static description sets off something dynamic on the part of your body: you may caress, kneel or huddle, but you do not simply look on.
>
> (B) The *qaṣīda* catalogues ... serve to render the described objects in such a way that they may be experienced exhaustively. Profiting by the tangibility that results from the static nature of description, the catalogues turn the objects into icons of the abstract relations in the model. The chief objects of description, lady and camel, through their iconic properties reinforce belief in the system of which they are a part. ... Mauss mentions that the Trobriand Islanders like to gaze at and stroke the objects of ritualized

[93] Andras Hamori, *On the Art of Medieval Arabic Literature* (Princeton, 1974), p. 22.
[94] Ibid., p. 22.

> exchange, not so much for their intrinsic worth as for the value they derive from being tangible manifestations of the exchange system, a system of harmony. Lady and camel are prized for their own sake, but in the *qaṣīda* their iconic function endows them with an aura.
>
> (C) Predictability—the high degree of predictability in the descriptions is quite what we should expect, precisely because each lady and each mount is a ritual object necessarily shaped to fit the grip of every member of the community.[95]

Although the surface of *kāvya* is nearly always active through *alaṃkāras*, shimmering with comparisons or shifting with punning, it is easy to see that the content beneath is also static, exhaustive, and predictable.

Hamori goes on to say that 'obviously' not all descriptive blocks have to do with ritualistic structures:

> Detailed conventional description, if one is engaged neither in ritual nor in auctioneering, implies the absence of its object. Ecphrasis, a minute and exact portrayal ... is one thing, but the retouching of the specific into the ideal is absurd if the specific happens to be walking by your side. And indeed, in many cases the kind of movement such a description triggers in the mind is an outward journey, towards a remote object. This sense of distance hangs over Annie Laurie; it is the very explicit distance of banishment that requires the loving descriptions in Kālidāsa's Cloud Messenger. The object is rendered palpable; it is placed at a distance. Two contradictory movements: two sides of the same coin.[96]

This is very helpful, though there are one or two points to quibble at. Surely, it is precisely the absence of the desired object that is the reason for the ritual. Auctioneering again is very close to the matter in hand. In an auction most of the potential buyers are at a distance from the desired object: the description enables them to judge how far they will go financially to possess themselves of it. It might not be practicable, nor desirable to distinguish sharply between ritualistic, quasi-ritualistic, and non-ritualistic description. I also fail to see two contradictory movements in rendering palpable and placing at a distance: the whole point is that distance from a desired object promotes detailed but idealized description. When Devī and the *yakṣa*'s

[95] Ibid., pp. 24 ff. [96] Ibid., p. 28.

wife are described, their images are summoned. The longing heart may go forth to meet them, but they too are hurrying to the rendezvous, so to speak. In so far as *kāvya* is affirmation, it is a means of fulfilling one's desires, however feebly and vicariously.

The main themes of *kāvya*, kings, gods and women, are intimately connected. The gods are kinglike, the kings are godlike, and a *sine qua non* of both conditions is the enjoyment of innumerable beautiful women. In its descriptions of nature as of women, *kāvya* portrays a profusion of good things, with a view to inducing a tranquil satiety in the reader.

The form of the *mahākāvya* contrasts sharply with that of story literature. The action of the former is faint and slow; in the latter the plots are boxed within each other, and movement is frenetic and muddled. The stories are full of go-getting tricksters, the *mahākāvya* has one ponderous king or god moving impassively to his goal. What they do have in common is success.

The so-called bourgeois story literature was largely concerned with that apotheosis of the common man, the Vidyādhara. Based on the more worthy model of the *yogin* who wins magic powers on his way to liberation, the Vidyādhara is a magician or superman. But unlike the heroes of Western literature, including the apposite figure of the juvenile hero, Superman, the Vidyādhara does not rescue maidens—he carries them off for his own pleasure. Van Buitenen observes that the idea of the Vidyādhara reflects 'disarmingly' the ambitions of the average person:

> An infinite capacity for gratifying an amorous nature; the ability to escape gloriously and take to the air as an aerial spirit, fast as thought, snatching occasionally an unsuspecting princess; a regal residence in vast terraced palaces with golden and gem-studded walls where hosts of attendants wait on the hero, recumbent on a gem encrusted couch, with the choicest banquets; a talent for music and song; and lastly a celestial bride of unsurpassed beauty and accomplishments.[97]

Any capable person with sufficient determination could attain this happy state. It is through assisting one such that Harṣa's ancestor Puṣpabhūti was able to found such an illustrious line of

[97] J. A. B. van Buitenen, 'The Indian Hero as a Vidyādhara', in *Traditional India*, ed. Milton Singer (reprinted Jaipur, 1975), p. 103.

ancestors. The same magical notions lie at the heart of both *kāvya* and *kathā*, the one regal, the other vulgar in its manifestations.

When Bhairavācārya, the intending 'paramour of Vidyādharīs' in the *Harṣacarita*, begins his ritual, he sits on the chest of a corpse making offerings to the fire burning from its mouth. Bāṇa fancies:

> As he offered some black sesamum seeds, it seemed as though in eagerness to become a Vidyādhara he were annihilating the atoms of defilement which caused his mortal condition.[98]

Likewise, the central thrust if *kāvya* is to remove defilement from life itself, by dealing only with beautiful things, in order to achieve its own sophisticated if incomplete version of fairyland. *Kāvya* found its milieu amongst those who lusted for life but found themselves in a world of extreme uncertainty:

> This military aristocracy arrogated all the power, all the wealth, all the beautiful women, all the luxuries of life, fighting endless bloody wars for short-lived conquests...[99]

They took what they wanted—the difficulty was keeping it. Battle is a prominent feature of the *mahākāvya*, taking up the last *sargas*. The king or god defeats his enemy conclusively. A notable feature here is the lavish use of difficult figures of speech, making the reading an arduous task. This difficulty might be specially designed to recreate, in transposed form, the dangers and terrors of battle. At length the reader, like the hero, emerges to victory, and the final verses are freed from the poet's verbal weaponry. The labour of composing the poem and the labour of perusing it could not be wasted effort. *Kāvya* reiterated the good things of life, and culminated in the total suppression of opposition. The reader wins through to certainty.

There is another way of viewing poetry, a way which initially seems more likely than that of ritual—I refer to poetry as play, as *līlā*. Play is different from the European notion of amusement, which along with instruction formed the dual function of poetry.

[98] *Ucchvāsa* 3, ed. Kane, p. 51, lines 11 and 12 (trans. p. 92): kṛṣṇatilāhutinibhena vidyādharatvatṛṣṇayā mānuṣanirmāṇakāraṇakāluṣyaparamāṇūn iva kṣayaṃ upanayantam.

[99] Goetz, *Five Thousand Years of Indian Art*, p. 138.

Play is of fundamental importance in Hindu thought, and is closely bound up with kingship. Since the kingdom was run by Brahman ministers, such as the all-powerful Cāṇakya in Viśākhadatta's *Mudrārākṣasa*, the king could be left entirely free to please himself This ideal freedom which the king enjoys is a necessary precondition for *līlā*, a concept of cosmic significance. As Śaṅkara puts it in his commentary on *Brahmasūtra*, as a king plays, so too does Brahman create the world by way of play:

> We see in every-day life that certain doings of princes or other men of high position who have no unfulfilled desires left have no reference to any extraneous purpose, but proceed from mere sportfulness, as, for instance, their recreations in places of amusement. We further see that the process of inhalation and exhalation is going on without reference to any extraneous purpose, merely following the law of its own nature. Analogously, the activity of the Lord also may be supposed to be mere sport, proceeding from his own nature, without reference to any purpose... . Although the creation of this world appears to us a weighty and difficult undertaking it is mere play to the Lord, whose power is unlimited. And if in ordinary life we might possibly, by close scrutiny, detect some subtle motive, even for sportful action, we cannot do so with regard to the actions of the Lord, all of whose wishes are fulfilled, as Scripture says.[100]

It may be noted in passing that unlike Śaṅkara, poets in their preoccupation with their own compositions did not always consider the creation of the world to be 'a weighty and difficult undertaking'. And more to the point, kings often sported by writing poetry, becoming creators themselves.

There are texts which prescribe an exceedingly full timetable of arduous duties for a monarch, but more convincing, perhaps, is the description given in *Kādambarī* of how a king spent his day:

> sometimes busy with music, himself playing the *mṛdaṅga* drum, his jewelled bracelets jangling; sometimes hunting; sometimes composing poetry, having assembled a meeting of critics; sometimes discussing the *śāstras*; sometimes listening to histories and romances; sometimes painting; sometimes playing the *vīṇā*; sometimes revering the holy men who had come to see him; sometimes propounding various literary conundrums....[101]

[100] *Śaṅkarabhāsya ad Brahmasūtra* 2.1.33, trans. G. Thibaut, *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana with the Commentary by Śaṅkara*, Part 1 (Oxford, 1890), p. 357.

[101] *Kādambarī*, ed. and trans. M. R. Kale; I have condensed the passage. Text, p. 15,

This account is idealized, as every account of life in ancient India is. But undoubtedly much of the time of the king and his court was taken up with aesthetic matters, whether poetry, song or dance.

Leaving aside the musical interests of kings (well-documented, as in the case of Lalitāditya's grandson, Jayāpīḍa), 'Kings often aspired to the title of *kavi*. From an early period literary prowess was widely accepted as a distinction of the highest order, as appropriate for a king as military success.'[102] When such bizarre farragoes as the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* and the *Bhojaprabandha*, quasi-anthologies describing kings' relations with their poets, show a society obsessed with poetry, where even burglars in the middle of the night cannot prevent themselves from bursting into poetry, and challenges to foes are made and averted by verses, the picture they present is not entirely implausible. A more extreme as well as better authenticated poeticization[103] of court society was for instance found in tenth-century Japan:

> Upper-class Heian life was punctuated with poetry from beginning to end, and no important event was complete without it. Birth was attended by an avalanche of congratulatory verses; poetic exchanges were a central part of the formal courting ceremonies; and, when death approached, the Heian gentleman would round out his verse-filled existence with a parting poem .... In view of its extraordinarily wide use, the ability to compose poetry was a *sine qua non* for any self-respecting gentleman or lady. A skilful verse was often the best way to win a woman's favours, or, equally, to obtain a promotion ... . In a society of literary amateurs the occasional person who was unable to turn his hand to poetry laboured under at least as great a handicap as would a gentleman in the court of Henry VIII who could not mount a horse.[104]

line 5–p. 16, line 1 (trans. slightly altered, p. 8): sa kadācid anavaratadolāyamāna-ratnavalayo ... svayam ārabdhamṛdaṅgavādyaḥ saṃgītakaprasaṅgena, kadācid ... mṛgayāvyāpāreṇa, kadācid ābaddhavidagdhamaṇḍalaḥ kāvyaprabandharacanena, kadācid chāstrālāpena, kadācid ākhyānakākhyāyiketihāsapurāṇākarṇanena, kadācid ālekhyavinodena, kadācid darśanāgatamuni janacaraṇaśuśruṣayā, kadācid akṣaracyutakamātrācyutakabindumatīgūḍhacaturthapādaprahelikāpradānādibhir...

[102] A. K. Warder, *Indian Kāvya Literature*, Vol. 1 (Delhi, 1972), p. 205.

[103] This coinage, though clumsy, parallels the well-known term Sanskritisation, in that both are aspects of sophisticated conventionalisation; indeed, in the Indian context, poeticisation in the sense of *kāvya* running riot is the ultimate degree of Sanskritisation.

[104] Ivan Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince*, Penguin ed. (Harmondsworth, 1969), pp. 192 ff.

Even if we entirely disregard the extravagant accounts of Ballāla (author-cum-compiler of the *Bhojaprabandha*) and his like, it is clear that *kāvya* was a group activity. In the passage from *Kādambarī* just quoted, King Tārāpīḍa does not simply compose poetry—he also arranges for critics to discuss it. This would have posed no problem, for as Rājaśekhara says, when the king is a poet, every one will be a poet:

> The king ... should have an assembly-room built for the examination *kāvyas*. It should have sixteen pillars, four doors, and eight turrets. The king's pleasure-house should adjoin it. In the middle of the hall there should be a platform eighteen inches high, its surface adorned with jewels, flanked by four pillars; on it is to be the king's seat. To the north of this seat should sit the Sanskrit poets. A poet composing in several languages should be assigned his seat according to that which he is best at. But if he is equally good in several languages, he should move about, sitting now here, now there. Behind the Sanskrit poets should sit those learned in the Vedic lore, philosophers, specialists in the Purāṇas and in Smṛti, physicians, astrologers, and others such. To the east should sit Prākṛt poets, and behind them, actors, dancers, singers, musicians, story-tellers, strolling-players, drummers, and others such. To the west, Apabhraṃśa poets, and behind them, painters and sculptors, jewel-setters, jewellers, goldsmiths, carpenters, blacksmiths, and others such. To the south, poets in Paiśācī, and behind them, parasites, courtesans, rope-dancers, mimes, wrestlers, soldiers, and others such.
>
> When he is seated comfortably there, the king should let the poetry session commence. He should have the works read out, and he should pass judgement upon them. In gifts and marks of honour he should emulate Vāsudeva, Sātavāhana, Śūdraka, Sāhasāṅka and all the other presidents of academies. And the other members of his assembly should be honoured and encouraged, and as the occasion demands they should receive rewards. Proper reverence [*pūjā*] should be shown to a divine poem [*lokottara kāvya*], or to its poet. At intervals the king should authorize readings of the *śāstras* in the poetry session. A sweet is not relished unless accompanied by something pungent. At intervals between *kāvyas* and *śāstras*, let him be agreeable to the connoisseurs. And for learned men from other countries, let him arrange a meeting in just the same way, and honour them according to their worth. And let him win over those of them who are looking for support, and let him retain them. The ocean of a king is the one and only refuge for jewel-like men. And the king's courtiers should emulate the behaviour of their

king. Good disposition on the part of the king's courtiers is a service rendered to the king.

In the great cities the king will organize assemblies of brahmans to examine poems and treatises. Those who pass this examination should receive a brahman's chariot and a silk turban.[105]

The formal symmetry of the seating arrangements does not quite have the ring of truth, especially since the category of poet in Paiśācī, Spirit language, seems to have been invented for the benefit of this symmetry. A far more relaxed picture of poetry-reading is given by Bāṇa's description of King Tārāpīḍa's assembly hall, where sit vassal kings:

Some were carrying on the sport of playing at dice; some were practising the game of chess; some were playing on the seven-stringed *parivādinī* lute; some were drawing portraits of His Majesty on the painting-board; some were starting conversations about poems; some were indulging in jocular talk; some were working out dot-verses, where all consonants were represented by dots; some were solving riddle-poems; some were mulling over the fine sayings in the poems written by His Majesty; some were reading out *dvipadī* playlets; some were appreciating the merits of poets; some were drawing ornamental decorations on the ground; some were talking with the numerous courtesans; and some were listening to the songs of the bards.[106]

I must pass over the fact that the connection of kings with drama was greater than with poetry. King Harṣa and King Yaśovarman, to name but two, wrote dramas highly approved by the poeticians. Moreover, kings figure largely in the plots of plays, either ideally, as in the many plays based on the story of their exemplar, Rāma, or more realistically in the other great branch of Sanskrit drama which is about the fornication of kings, that is to say, their acquiring new and younger wives.

[105] *Kāvyamīmāṃsa*, pp. 54 ff. I have for the most part closely followed the translation of N. Stchoupak and L. Renou, *La Kāvyamīmāṃsā de Rājaśekhara* (Paris, 1946).

[106] *Kādambarī*, ed. and trans. M. R. Kale, trans. p. 122, text p. 143, line 11–p. 144, line 3: prasārayatā durodarakrīḍām, abhyasyatāṣṭāpadavyāpāram, āsphālayatā parivādinīm, ālikhatācitraphalake bhūmipālapratibimbam, ābadhnatā kāvyagoṣṭhīm, ātanvatā parihāsakathāṃ, vindatā bindumatīṃ, cintayatā prahelikāṃ, bhāvayatā narapatikṛtakāvyasubhāṣitāni, paṭhatā dvipadīḥ, gṛhṇatā kaviguṇān, utkiratā patrabhaṅgān, ālapatā vāravilāsinījanam, ākarṇayatā vaitālikagītam....

And the connections of drama with ritual are much closer than poetry's, and are well known.[107]

I want now to consider the creative aspect of *līlā*. Just as god creates the universe, so does the poet create a new world. Mammaṭa begins his treatise of poetics by boldly stating the superiority of art to nature:

> Splendid is the poet's speech, producing a creation which is free from the constraints of nature's laws, consisting entirely of pleasure, totally independent, splendid with the nine sentiments.[108]

By way of commentary, Mammaṭa observes,

> Brahmā's creation is subject to the laws of Nature, is full of pleasure, pain and delusion, is dependent upon material and co-operative causes, such as atoms and actions—has only six tastes, and these, too, not always of an agreeable nature. The creation of the poet's speech, on the contrary, is different, and hence is 'splendid'.[109]

Mammaṭa later quotes, merely as an example of a figure of speech, a verse from Hāla which sits well with the opening of *Kāvyaprakāśa*:

> Ever glorious is that Goddess of Speech who has taken up her abode in the lotus of the poet's mouth, exhibiting a universe of unique character, and who is, as it were, ridiculing the old Fogey.[110]

However the note of ridicule would not be auspicious at the beginning of a work, even though it does constitute an important element of *kāvya*; one good reason for a new creation is the inadequacy of the world in which we find ourselves.

Of all poets, it is Bāṇa who pre-eminently lays stress on new

[107] See J. Gonda, 'Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung und Wesen des Indischen Dramas', *Acta Orientalia*, Vol. XIX, 1943.

[108] *Kāvyaprakāśa* 1.1 (ed. S. Jhā and trans. G. Jha, p. 1; trans. modified):
niyatikṛtaniyamarahitāṃ hlādaikamayīm ananyaparatantrām/
navarasarucirāṃ nirmitim ādadhatī bhāratī kaver jayati//

[109] *Vṛtti* ad 1.1 (ed. S. Jhā and trans. G. Jha, trans. slightly altered): niyatiśaktyā niyatarūpā sukhaduḥkhamohasvabhāvā paramāṇvādyupādānakarmādisahakārikāraṇaparatantrā ṣaḍrasā na ca hṛdyaiva taiḥ tādṛśī brahmaṇo nirmitir nirmāṇam. etadvilakṣaṇā tu kavivāṅnirmitiḥ.

[110] *Kāvyaprakāśa* (ed. S. Jhā and trans. G. Jha, p. 86):
jā theraṃ va hasantī kaivaaṇaṃburuhabaddhaviṇivesā/
dāvei bhuaṇamaṇḍalamaṇṇaṃ via jaai sā vāṇī//

creation. In his constantly rhapsodic manner, already referred to, he delights in creating a new and superior world: Harṣa's royal camp 'seemed like a creation-ground where the Prajāpatis practised their skill, or a fourth world made out of the choicest parts of the other three.'[111] The following reflections of the love-sick Candrāpīḍa are apt for Bāṇa's own perpetually surcharged creation:

> Most likely it is my levity, natural in the case of human beings, that is thus deluding me by giving rise to thousands of such false ideas. It is either the exuberance of youth, or Cupid, that thus intoxicates, deadening all power of thought. Even a particle of affection is spread far and wide by youth's ardour, as is a drop of oil by water. There is nothing that youth's light susceptibility, like a poet's genius, which worries itself with hundreds of fancies of many sorts created by itself, does not imagine. There is nothing which the propensity of a youthful person's mind, when swayed by the clever God of love, does not paint, like a painting-brush wielded by a clever painter ... . Like a dream, desire exhibits even things which have never been experienced before. Like the conjuror's bundle of peacock's feathers, hope can set before one even impossible things.[112]

The freedom of prose allows Bāṇa endlessly to stack one image on top of another; within the limits of a verse, the poet is restricted to one, or at the most two or three, images, which are placed in a usually elaborate relationship with the original by the *alaṃkāra*. Successive verses will deal with the same subject, but the cumulating abandon of Bāṇa's method is lost. Nevertheless, in both cases, levity, *laghutā*, is very much present; in the rush of enthusiasm in one case, in the other the studied contempt for reality. In both cases there is a contempt for the world.

In Bāṇa's case, poetry, like love, deadens all power of

[111] *Harṣacarita*, *Ucchvāsa* 2, ed. Kane, p 28, lines 4 and 5; trans. Cowell and Thomas, p. 49: sarvaprajānirmāṇabhūmim iva prajāpatīnāṃ lokatrayasāroccayaracitaṃ caturtham iva lokam.

[112] *Kādambarī*, ed. and trans. Kale, trans. p. 254 f.; text, p. 300, line 12–p.301, line 4: prāyeṇa mānuṣyakasulabhā laghutā mithyāsaṃkalpasahasrair evaṃ māṃ vipralabhate. luptaviveko yauvanamado madayati madano vā. yatas timiropahatotimiropahateva yūnāṃ dṛṣṭir alpam api kāluṣyaṃ mahat paśyati. snehalavo'pi vāriṇeva yauvanamadena dūraṃ vistāryate. svayam utpāditānekacintāśatākulā kavimatir iva taralatā na kiṃcinnotprekṣate. nipuṇamanmathagṛhītā citravartikeva taruṇacittavṛttir na kiṃ cin nālikhati. ... svapna ivānanubhūtam api manoratho darśayati. indrajālapicchikevāsaṃbhāvyam api pratyāśā puraḥ sthāpayati.

discriminative thought (*viveka*), when in the free flow of associative memory one image after another flows forth to be heaped upon the original. The very word 'heaping up', *puñjīkṛ*, is frequently used by him. It is Bāṇa above all who is a conjuror, producing in quick succession unexpected images out of nowhere. In verse, the more elaborate form enforces slower motion.

We may note here how the keyword *līlā* comes with Ratnākara to be used as a term of comparison, as in this verse from the *sarga* describing the ocean:

Dreadful in its motion,
the circle of the whirlpool
arising from the surging waves and billows of the agitated ocean,
bore a graceful resemblance
to a broad earthenware plate
being turned on a potter's wheel. (22.56)[113]

I have translated *līlā* here as 'graceful resemblance', a rendering that is by no means satisfactory but is as near as I can get. In such instances the commentator glosses with *śobhā*, 'beauty', which is far too general. Ingalls points out that *līlā* often signifies 'gracefulness'.[114] 'Semblance' would be more appropriate than 'resemblance' but would require an alteration of the verb in the verse. In this verse the *upameya* and the *upamāna*, the whirlpool and the plate, conjointly form the poet's own *līlā*, the new creation that is a transmutation and recolouring of the old. Here the strange and dangerous combines itself with the familiar and safe, the character of each imposing itself upon the other.

Ratnākara's idiosyncratic fondness for this particular usage of *līlā* has, I suspect, its origin in two or three verses of Māgha's, of which this is specially significant:

[113] saṃkṣobham āgatavataḥ prasarattaraṅga-
bhaṅgotthitaṃ kramaviśaṅkaṭam amburāśeḥ/
tālūramaṇḍalam adhatta kulālacakra-
nirvartyamānapariṇāhiśarāvalīlām//

[114] 'The word occurs very frequently in the SRK [*Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*] verses, usually in the sense of "grace, gracefulness", regularly of motion or of objects in motion.' Daniel H. H. Ingalls, 'Words for Beauty in Classical Sanskrit Poetry', *Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown* (New Haven, 1962), p. 105. However, *līlā* does not seem to be used in Ingalls' text in the same way as here described. And I think it is only coincidence that my example here, and the one that follows, include motion.

The rays of the young sun
falling into the houses through the window grills
bore a graceful resemblance
to heated iron arrows
fired by Love in his anger
at the women's lovers
who desired to leave in the morning. (*Śiś*. 11.50)[115]

Sadistic grace this! We should perhaps remember that if the world is God's *līlā* it is also *māyā*, an illusion, a conjuring trick. Suffering is not real. Māgha does use *līlā* once in its theological, and normal, meaning of 'play' when he speaks of the *līlā* of Śiva in Śiśupāla's envoy's praise of his master:

This resplendent king,
conquering fish-bannered ‹Pradyumna›/‹Kāma›,
honoured ‹by the hosts of Vṛṣṇis›/‹by his *gaṇas*, on his bull›,
destroying the haughty ‹Andhakas›/‹demon Andhaka›,
will imitate the *līlā* of Hara. (*Śiś*. 16.58)[116]

Here *līlā* refers to Śiva's participation in the game of the cosmos that he himself has invented. In particular, slaying the dreadful demon is play for Śiva. But in general in *kāvya*, especially in Ratnākara's usage, *līlā* meaning 'beauty', 'graceful resemblance', is the cosmic play of the *kavi* within his own cosmos, himself creator, himself performer of heroic deeds of imagination—of punning and of comparison. *Līlā* is *śobhā*, play is beauty as the commentators say, because *kāvya*'s new creation does seek to be entirely beautiful.

Like the harlots in the festivities at Harṣa's birth, *kāvya* too is 'as void of discrimination as to what is proper to be said or not as

[115] dadhati paripatantyo jālavātāyanebhyas
taruṇatapanabhāso mandirābhyantareṣu/
praṇayiṣu vanitānāṃ prātar icchatsu gantuṃ
kupitamadanamuktottaptanārācalīlām//

This use of *līlā* to mean 'beauty' in the widest and most unexpected applications may spring from an *ekākṣarapāda* verse (a single consonant in each quarter-line) which says of Arjuna firing arrows that he *lalau līlāṃ*, glossed, *śobhāṃ prāpa*, 'obtained beauty'—*Kirātārjunīya* 15.5.

[116] acirāj jitamīnaketano vilasan vṛṣṇigaṇair namaskṛtaḥ/
kṣitipaḥ kṣayitoddhatāndhako haralīlāṃ sa viḍambayiṣyati//

Pradyumna, a son of Kṛṣṇa, is considered to be a reincarnation of Kāma. The Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas were both ancestral tribes of Kṛṣṇa, and are usually mentioned together.

the childish play of happiness.'[117] The three verses just cited are each an example of this.

Other literatures present parallels here:

> It is difficult to respond as fully as is desirable to a great many characteristic Baroque works of literary art if one has not developed a sense of the very mode of artistic being of those works, a mode of being which has little to do with simple didacticism and still less to do with simple mimesis. It has, I believe, a great deal to do with the phenomenon of *play*—that vast and crucial area of human activity of which play is a particular local division. If the entire creation is literally a work of art, then that creation has of its very nature something of that attractively and gently spurious quality which adheres to any artefact as soon as it is consciously felt *as* artefact, and much of that quality, that complex of jocosity, make-believe, and ambivalence which makes up the complex of *play*, will characterize creation at one remove, that is to say, the art of man.[118]

In India at least, there does seem to be a strong connection between the play of the king and his court on the one hand, and the play of poetry on the other. Māgha links kings and poets in quite another respect:

> Briefly sleeping and then awake,
> for the kingdom as for a poem,
> great and unfathomable as the ocean,
> kings like poets ponder their plans;
> their minds are clear
> in the early dawn
> and they reflect upon the profound problem
> of ‹the ends of man›/‹the variety of meanings .
> (Śiś. 11.6)[119]

The evidence and the likelihood is that this is more true of poets than of kings. The king's most basic task of all, that of supporting the earth, left him with plenty of time on his hands. The king's freedom from the business of state, which was handled by able

[117] *Harṣacarita, Ucchvāsa* 4, ed. Kane, p. 8, lines 23–4: vācyāvācyavivekaśūnyā bālakrīḍā iva saubhagasya (trans. Cowell and Thomas, p. 114).

[118] F. J. Warnke, *Versions of Baroque* (New Haven and London), p. 91.

[119] kṣaṇaśayitavibuddāḥ kalpayantaḥ prayogān
udadhimahati rājye kāvyavad durvigāhe/
gahanam apararātraprāptabuddhiprasādāḥ
kavaya iva mahīpāś cintayanty arthajātam//

specialists, allowed him and his court to devote themselves to high art. The greater the freedom, the greater the inclination to trammel oneself with the demands of technique. There is every reason to suppose that 'the variety of meanings' was a more congenial problem for the king than 'the ends of man'.

The discipline of art was all too often the only discipline to which the king voluntarily submitted himself In *Vikramorvaśīya*, the king, unable to find his latest beloved, has his burden of grief added to by rain-clouds. (By the convention of *kāvya*, the rainy season, so eagerly awaited by the population at large, augments the sufferings of separated lovers, because rain makes travel difficult. In this, as so often, *kāvya* stands in diametric opposition to common humanity. The rains which cause the crops to grow and allay the fierce heat thwart the lover's purpose.) In Kālidāsa's play King Purūravas wilfully considers stopping the rain:

> I just can't ignore the growing torment of my heart. Since the sages declare that the king is Time's cause, why shouldn't I countermand the rainy season?[120]

The king takes it for granted that he has ordered the rainy season in the first place. Fortunately for his subjects, the king relents in his selfish purpose, but only because the rainy season seems to pay him honour, the noisy peacocks being bards, and the mountains with their torrents merchants with rich gifts. Meyer observes, 'The king in Old India often made his subjects' lives very uncomfortable, and he was often of most benefit when he—slept.'[121] The greatest of Kashmir's kings, Lalitāditya, when in his cups ordered one of his cities to be burnt:

> As he watched from the terrace of the palace, his countenance lit by the sheets of fire, he was like a goblin bursting with laughter in wild glee.[122]

[120] *Vikramorvaśiya*, ed. and trans. Karnik and Desai, p. 100 (here my trans.). mudhaiva khalu maya manasaḥ paritāpavṛddhir upekṣyate. yathā munayo'pi vyāharanti rājā kālasya kāraṇam iti. tat kim ahaṃ jaladasamayaṃ na pratyādiśāmi.

[121] Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India*, p. 286 fn.

[122] *Rājataraṅgiṇi* 4.313 (trans. Pandit, p. 145):

harmyāgrād vīkṣamāṇas tadvahnijvālojjvalānanaḥ/
ulkāmukha ivābhūt sa harṣāṭṭahasitotkaṭaḥ/ /

Fortunately his ministers deceived him by setting fire instead to the cavalry haystacks. The irresponsibility of kings, of which Lalitāditya's command is a stark example, and which springs naturally from the king's condition, finds its reflection in *kāvya*'s attitude to reality.

Derrett takes a jaundiced view of the potentially creative freedom of kings. Remarking that kings' 'conscious specialization is self-exaltation as power incarnate', he goes on to say:

> No initiative, no originality was expected from kings. It is remarkable that quite a few did write treatises, manuals, and even encyclopedias which have survived; but one suspects they took up study as a hobby and employed their court pandits to do the research and ghost their compositions for them.[123]

This somewhat underestimates the strength of culture in the court, that culture which finds its summation in the *mahākāvya*. Derrett omits to mention the poetry written by kings. It was precisely in the sphere of the arts that kings were able to show initiative, which is to say, as much initiative as anyone else, and Bāṇa explicitly states that King Harṣa's poetry was original.[124]

In the same article, Derrett argues forcefully against Dumont's thesis of Indian kingship—that the political is secularized and subordinated to the religious. Derrett's conclusion is as follows:

> The political element was not 'secularized', as it was (i) from the beginning a practical, 'seen' question, a matter of ways and means; and (ii) the chief manipulator of politics, the king himself, had many superstitious functions and superstitious attributes.
>
> The political element was not subordinated to the religious. The brahmins were no more 'religious' than was the king himself; and when he showed them respect, as he was bound to do, he was symbolizing his civilization's poverty of invention and lack of self-confidence (as it still manifests), in that it must reverence forever the mere vessels of that unintelligible, fossilized entity, the Veda—even in its minimally present form. The king was not subordinated to brahmins in his actual performance of his duties: he manipulated them, and utilized them. After all, he was their principal patron. Dedicated to holy poverty, they drew their own success from his. They were therefore likely to be careful and

[123] 'Rājadharma' *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 35/4, 1976, pp. 597–609, p. 606.

[124] *Harṣacarita*, ed. Kane, p. 32, line 22: kāvyakathāsv apītam apy amṛtam udvamantam. However, this need not have been the truth, of course.

faithful advisers—at least until a rival prince offered them marginally better terms.[125]

This statement, however offensively phrased, is in part persuasive. With regard to kings' utilization of the Brahmans, I have already cited Goetz to the effect that the Brahmans were bribed to accept the claims of arriviste kings. However, I would suggest that the king and court were not altogether prepared to 'reverence forever the mere vessels' of the Veda; that the court showed great invention and colossal self-confidence by putting forward what was almost a counter-culture, a rival to the Vedas—*kāvya*.

'Brahmans took power when they could, as they still do'[126] not least because of their unique intellectual training, as Derrett implies.[127] It was in the court's interest to foster its own intellectual tradition, and this tradition arose more or less naturally around the regal discourse of charter and proclamation along with panegyric. At the same time, however, there are some striking resemblances between *kāvya* and the Vedic hymns. If the Veda is, in Derrett's words, an 'unintelligible, fossilized entity', so too is *kāvya*! Kingdoms needed clever men to rurn them; since familiarity with an arcane literature was the cardinal sign of intellect, of aristocratic mind, the new men made themselves a new badge for their authority.

An indication of rivalry between *kāvya* and the Vedas is given by the following episode from the *Bhojaprabandha*:

> Then upon a time certain ones deeply versed in Revelation and Tradition, knowing the King to be fond of poetry, sat down somewhere outside the city saying: 'With the favour of Bhuvaneśvarī [Durgā] we shall make poetry.' By one among them, fancying himself to be a scholar, a quarter-distich was read:
>
> 'Give food, O Lord of Kings.'
>
> By another was read:
>
> 'Full of ghee and broth.'
>
> The second half of the distich does not flash forth. Then Kālidāsa was going for worship to the temple of the goddess. Seeing him, the Brāhmans said: 'To us, though knowing all the Vedas, Bhoja giveth nothing at all, but to them like Thine Honour he giveth at pleasure. Now we are come with the idea of composing poetry. Reflecting long the first half was thought out. Making the second

[125] 'Rājadharma', pp. 607 ff. [126] Ibid., p. 603. [127] Ibid.

half, give it us; then he offereth us something.' Having thus spoken, the half was recited before him; and he, hearing it, said:

'And a curd of buffalo-milk white as the moonlight of the autumnal moon.'

And they, going to the King's palace, said to the door-keepers: 'We are come having made poetry. Show us the King.' And they [the door-keepers] laughing out of merriment, going and doing obeisance to the King, said:

'With teeth like king-beans and hands on their hips, Vedist foes of ślokas stand at the door, O Mighty King.'[128]

Not surprisingly, the king recognizes Kālidāsa's handiwork, but pays out to the Vedists at the standard rate of lakh per syllable.

Kāvya did not openly set out to rival the Veda, as did the *Mahābhārata*—'He who reads the Bhārata should be known to have plumbed the Vedas',[129] cited by E. W. Hopkins with the comment, 'The *Mahābhārata* is not only a Veda, it is so important a Veda that to read it is to dispense with the need of reading Vedas.'[130] Like the Vedas, the *Mahābhārata* too is something of a dinosaur; they are both from a past age. *Kāvya* is ever renewed, for its authors are mortal men. This lack of a past, a great handicap from the Indian point of view, did not prevent *kāvya* from subsuming certain features of the Vedas.

To begin with, and primarily, *kāvya* too is unintelligible. Renou notes that *kāvya*, except in verses quoting direct speech, greatly economizes on particles, whereby it differs from the rest of Sanskrit, including in this instance the Vedas, and remarks, 'As with so many of the linguistic phenomena of *kāvya*, one may again wonder if the authors did not systematically avoid whatever could facilitate the understanding of the text. *Kāvya* is not made for those whom Grammar calls *mandabuddhi* ['slow-witted'], who need those crutches that are particles.'[131]

The extremes of this tendency are to be found in the various sorts of word-play that occur in battle-scenes and in descriptions of a mountain, where the meaning is hidden behind repetitious sounds. *Yamaka*, *ekākṣara* and *dvyakṣara*, to name but a few

[128] Louis H. Gray (trans.), *The Narrative of Bhoja* (New Haven, 1950), p. 30.

[129] 1.62.32; vijñeyaḥ sa ca vedānām pārago bhāratam paṭhan.

[130] *The Great Epic of India* (reprinted Calcutta, 1969), p. 369.

[131] Louis Renou, 'Sur la Structure du Kāvya', *Journal Asiatique*, 1959, p. 16.

'grotesque experiments'[132] do not have Vedic origins; but the other great source of unintelligibility, *śleṣa*, does. 'This is a procedure which is Vedic in origin: looked at from a certain angle, the hymns of the Veda were already only a succession of *śleṣa*, rudimentarily at least.'[133] There is the difference that in the Vedas the secondary meaning was a kind of harmonic or underlying filigree, whereas 'in the classical art . . the two concurrent values remain parallel and of the same weight, one whole group of meanings applying to the principal subject, another group, no less directly, to the parallel sentence.'[134] *Kāvya* is patently artificial here because it is studiously seeking a Vedic effect.

It is true that many, if not all, high cultures tend to be much concerned with restricting themselves to the self-congratulatory élite that produced them; *kāvya* might not have been so very different if the Vedas had been altogether lost. *Dhvani*, which similarly aims at being unintelligible to the uninitiated, does not seem to have any Vedic roots. Some correspondences between the two poetries might be explained by common features in their respective backgrounds, rather than by deliberate imitation on *kāvya*'s part. The fact that both were forms of high art, rather than any direct continuity of tradition, might better explain some of Renou's more subtle insights; as for instance his statement that *kāvya*'s concern to condense makes it 'the direct heir of the Vedic mantras, that are dominated by this same concern which they effect by other means.'[135] Might not sophistication alone be the common factor? It is not only density of expression that *kāvya* shares with the Vedas, but also its reverse: 'As in the old hymns, it is appearances, or one might say, the surface reality, that makes one think that there is surcharge, verbosity; at a deeper level, one notes on the contrary a tendency to contraction, to condensing.'[136]

The vocabulary of *kāvya* 'more than once goes straight back to the [Vedic] hymns.'[137] 'One will not be surprised at the multiplicity of luminous images in a state of language where the simple "to resemble" has become "to shine like": there too one

[132] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 345.

[133] Renou, 'La structure du *kāvya*,' p. 5. [134] Ibid.

[135] Louis Renou, *Histoire de la Langue Sanskrite* (Lyon, 1956), p. 169 fn.

[136] Idem., 'La structure du *kāvya*,' p. 9.

[137] Idem., *Histoire de la Langue Sanskrite*, p. 175.

should discern the distant influence of the Vedic panorama, where the characteristics of "light" and "fire" were so often evident or implied.'[138]

Finally a profound general comment of Renou's on the semantics of *kāvya* may be given the same further analysis as was *śleṣa*, and be taken to show deliberate imitation of the Vedic manner. Renou demonstrates that the meaning of many words used in *kāvya* which do not refer to clearly circumscribed concrete things are 'elusive', and he speaks of 'a semantic displacement'.[139] This blurring of meaning partly shows 'the influence of the Vedic hymns, where so many words already seemed to defy all rational categorization. But whereas in the Veda it was a matter above all of bringing out or hinting at secondary values of a given term of which the primary meaning remains relatively precise, in *kāvya* we have to do with a kind of fundamental indecision which does not allow us to keep with any certainty to one basic meaning rather than another.'[140] Perhaps here, as with *śleṣa*, a situation which had grown up naturally, became more bizarre when consciously sought after by *kāvya*.

Most Sanskrit poets were probably Brahmans, but just as in modern times there is a gulf between those Brahmans who are actively concerned with their heritage and those who wish to get on in the world, so too in the past there was surely a gulf between those who wanted only the freedom to continue to preserve the Vedas and those who wished to make a fortune and gain power.[141] *Kāvya* is intimately connected with the latter group. The *mahākāvya* is at one and the same time a description of and the means of getting on in the world. In this it altogether replaces the Vedas, which are the sanctification of the bribery of out-of-date gods. Not only the Vedas but also the two great epics are behind the times and have to be redone, in different

[138] Idem., 'La structure du *kāvya*', p. 7.

[139] Ibid., p. 52.

[140] Ibid.

[141] In other words, secularized brahmans, as here: 'those secularized Brāhmans who frequented the courts of princes and the camps of warriors recited their praises in public, and kept records of their genealogies.' Nesfield, as cited without further reference by W. Crooke, article 'Bhāṭ, Chāraṇ' in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 2, p. 553. For those poets we are dealing with here, the distance in their own day between themselves and bards was probably very great. Secularized brahmans ran court and state, of course.

scale and perspective. The result, the consummation of court culture, is the *mahākāvya*.

Turning finally to the poet, we may begin by noting that in their claim to possess *pratibhā* the court poets are clearly successors to the ancient *ṛṣis* 'who saw the sacred texts, being fully conscious of the subtlety, eternity and supersensuousness of the *pratibhā* and having an intuitive perception of their duty and of the established order of things, have communicated it to their fellow-men and therefore expressed it in the form of the articulate language of Vedas and Vedāṅgas.'[142]

Like the orthodox Brahman the poet should be pure, but in secular fashion. 'There are three sorts of purity: purity of speech, purity of mind, and purity of body. The first two are produced by study of the *śāstras*. The third consists of having well cut toe-nails, one's mouth freshened with betel, one's body anointed to the right degree, and in being well but not over-dressed.'[143]

Rājaśekhara's account of the poet as 'a man of fashion and wealth'[144] is well-known; most recently, Lee Siegel observes that the poet 'passes his time in cultivation of his social (as well as his literary) style.'[145] One might speculate on the relationship between social and literary styles. Although the notions of *dhvani* and *rasa* do impede the freedom essential to true literary appreciation, they are, of course, profoundly important—they are the ideas, and ideals, of the court. Closely associated with *rasa* as literary concept are, surely, the refining and control of the actual emotions of courtiers; as for *dhvani*, Cardinal Richelieu was to declare, 'Savoir dissimuler est le savoir des rois'—dissimulation was the art of the court. Several of Ānandavardhana's examples of *dhvani* are of the cunning of deceit. Here Ānandavardhana's examples are from the bedroom, but Kalhaṇa gives an instance of that other form of equivocation, *śleṣa*, being used in a political context.[146] In Māgha's *mahākāvya*, Śiśupāla's

[142] Puṇyarāja on *Vākyapadīya* 1, 5 as paraphrased by J. Gonda. *The Vision of the Vedic Poets* (The Hague, 1963), p. 341. *Kavi* and *kāvya* are of course also important terms in the Veda, and are discussed by Gonda, *ibid.*, pp. 42 ff. and p. 57. Though the names do not change, the tradition is not continuous.

[143] *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, G.O.S. ed., p. 49. In such a state of purity, Rājaśekhara tells us, the poet can win over Sarasvatī.

[144] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 341.

[145] *Sacred and Profane Dimensions of Love in Indian Traditions* (Delhi, 1978), p. 207

[146] *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 4.636 and 637: after Jayāpīḍa became corrupted by power, ambiguous verses were circulated about him.

envoy employs *śleṣa* to simultaneously express defiance and submission.[147]

There is some significance, if only superficial, in Māgha's comparison of kings with poets, cited above. In the *Bhojaprabandha* and *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* poets approach kings at times in their wealth and generosity. Thus Māgha's wife bringing Bhoja's largesse to her husband when they had fallen on hard times, hears his, the poet's, virtues praised by beggars, and cannot resist giving all the money away to them. Māgha approves of this, but being unable to satisfy the further demands of the beggars, wills to expire on the spot. He had seen happier days, for he was formerly a millionaire with stables big enough for all Bhoja's army. On the occasion of the king's visit, after treating Bhoja to fruits out of season, and 'poems, tales, histories, and plays, not seen or heard before', the poet was able to artificially produce the hot season.[148] In this command over time he surpassed the king in *Vikramorvaśīya*, who only contemplated delaying the rainy season.

Poets do not produce fame only for kings; it is also for themselves. Bhāmaha declares,

> Even for those who have passed away to heaven, if tney have composed good literary works, there surely remains a beautiful body made out of poetry, free from disease.
>
> And as long as his imperishable fame secures heaven and earth, so long does he, the blessed one, continue to occupy a place among the gods.[149]

One should not be misled by the tone of such passages as this into thinking that *kāvya* was just one more means to salvation, as Renou seems at one time to have believed:

> Literary art ... subserves knowledge of the individual and at the same time of the universe. It is part of a whole which culminates in sacred knowledge. Governed by the laws of poetics, the poem expresses in the first place the structure of the physical being: it has a body, vital breath, and a soul; on the other hand, like the Vedic

[147] *Sarga* 16.

[148] Tawney, trans. *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, p. 49.

[149] *Kāvyālaṅkāra* 1.6 and 7:

> upeyuṣām api divaṃ sannibandhavidhāyinām/
> āsta eva nirātaṅkaṃ kāntaṃ kāvyamayaṃ vapuḥ/ /
> ruṇaddhi rodasī cāsya yāvat kīrtir anaśvarī/
> tāvat kilāyam adhyāste sukṛtī vaibudhaṃ padam/ /

> sacrifice, it aims at imitating the cosmos, at establishing an emotional link between the individual and those norms (*pramāṇa*) which we find underlying the whole of Indian techniques, and which are the final product of the ancient concept of the cosmic law (*ṛta*). The glory of the poet manifests itself not only by material rewards (often considerable), honours and the favour of women, but by immortality. It is affirmed that the poet can in special cases escape from *saṃsāra*, that he can without difficulty attain deliverance.[150]

I have sought to show something rather different, that *kāvya* is an independent force in its own right. Although part of the general culture, it is a special product of the court for the court's special benefit. It cannot escape the contamination, if I may so express it, of the more general ideology (as with Renou's remarks here), but it is essentially autonomous.

When in his very last words Ratnākara tells the young king he serves with condescending pride that he too may in the course of time learn to be a *mahākavi*, we can see now something more of what is implicit in such a statement. As panegyrical affirmation *kāvya*, and above all *mahākāvya*, enriches the kingdom and the king; by participating in the process of *kāvya* the young king will demonstrate the extent of his own freedom and affirm the validity and autonomy of the court. However, to draw to the surface such underlying currents is grossly to overstate them. It is time for the poem itself.

[150] *L'Inde Classique*, Vol. 2, p. 111.

CHAPTER 4

Ratnākara's View of the *Haravijaya*

The seven verses which are appended to the *Haravijaya* are Ratnākara's personal statement about his poem; they provide the opportunity for us to begin the 'internal' study of the poem by seeing it through the poet's own eyes. We begin where Ratnākara ended, for we are aware of the gulf separating any artist's conscious intention from the final reality of his creation. Wellek and Warren justly observe:

> Artists may be strongly influenced by a contemporary critical situation and by contemporary critical formulae while giving expression to their intentions, but the critical formulae themselves might be quite inadequate to characterize their actual artistic achievement. The Baroque age is an obvious case in point, since a surprisingly new artistic practice found little expression either in the pronouncements of the artists or the comments of the critics .... The metaphysical poets had only a few quite inadequate critical formulae (like 'strong lines') which scarcely touch the actual novelty of their practice; and medieval artists frequently had purely religious or didactic 'intentions' which do not even begin to give expression to the artistic principles of their practice... 'Intentions' of the author are always 'rationalizations', commentaries which certainly must be taken into account but also must be criticized in the light of the finished work of art.[1]

We shall find in Ratnākara an attitude to poetry very different from that of the poeticians. As is only to be expected, poets had a far more positive and generous attitude towards poetry than did the poeticians; they always had their own innocent view of poetry, and they found poetics irksome.[2] Rājaśekhara's eccentric *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* puts this into allegory, from the poeticians' side—the woman who is the science of poetry is fashioned by the goddess Gaurī in order to domesticate the untamed poetry-man (Kāvyapuruṣa).[3]

[1] Wellek and Warren, *Theory of Literature*, p. 148.

[2] Critics are invariably called rogues (*khala, durjana*, etc.). See below, p. 112.

[3] *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* G.O.S. ed., p. 7, lines 23–4: tad etasya vaśīkaraṇaṃ kām api striyaṃ sṛjāmīti vicintayantī sāhityavidyāvadhūm udapādayat.

Ratnākara expresses himself obscurely on one or two important points, perhaps because he adopts a colloquial, or at least a freer style here; but in any case his manner is boldly assertive:

1 Ratnākara, son of Amṛtabhānu who was the son
of him who lived at Gaṅgāhrada on Himādri's peak
and was of Śrīdurgadatta's lineage,
wrote this poem, a lovely composition,
which is beautiful
because it is based on the deeds
of Śiva whose crest is the digit of the moon.

2 O King! even the mind of Vācaspati does not distrust
the verses which I pour forth,
sweet and lovely, provided with *alaṃkāras*,
delightfully clear
[and yet] unrestrained in the sections of difficult *yamaka*
and *śleṣa*,
unequalled in the way of *citra*.

3 There is a wonderful beauty of sound in our verses:
they pour forth surging *rasa*
—the rich nectar of bliss;
‹preeminently›/‹hyperbolically› expressing the truth of
things;
their fame, shining white as full moonlight,
is ear-ornament to the fairies in the sky
and nosegay to the universe.[4]

4 My eloquence is drunk in by poets' ears
for it is supreme for those intent on gushing poetry;
it's never burdensome,
even where six languages are used at once;

[4] śrīḍurgadattanijavaṃśahimādrisānu-
gaṅgāhradāśrayasutāmṛtabhānusūnuḥ/
ratnākaro lalitabandham idaṃ vyadhatta
candrārdhacūlacaritāśrayacāru kāvyam//

The remaining verses are prefaced: sa kila kavir evam uktavān ('the poet himself is supposed to have spoken thus').

lalitamadhurāḥ sālaṃkārāḥ prasādamanoramā
vikaṭayamakaśleṣoddhāraprabandhanirargalāḥ/
asadṛśagatīś citre mārge mamodgirato giro
na khalu nṛpate ceto vācaspater api śaṅkate//

sāndrāmṛtarasaparispandaniḥsyandinīnām
asmadvācām atiśayajuṣāṃ vastutattvābhidhāne/
prauḍhajyotsnādhavalavikasaddigvadhūkarṇapūra-
brahmastambastabakayaśasāṃ ko'pi ṭāṅkāraṭaṅkaḥ//

reaching the limit of what can be known,
rich in the very pure shining intuitive knowledge,
I Ratnākara, O King!
am present in your assembly,
my title 'Lord of Speech'.[5]

5 O King! know then that one on whose arising—
burning blind darkness—
‹the lakes›/‹fools› exhibit ‹purity›/‹perfect wisdom›
to be Ratnākara who has swallowed the ocean of speech;
and after him we may add
the sun, Agastya, and the submarine fire![6]

6 There is nothing in the world
that has not been written about
by poets excellently wise.
So, as far as one's subject is concerned
‹one need not worry about it being banal when
banality is the rule›/
‹one should not permit triviality of topic
out of concern for novelty
where there cannot be novelty›.
Thus it was Bāṇa first led the way
with writings great in scope, slow yet bold,
and O King! Ratnākara like a fire
blazes forth, a second such![7]

7 Listen to the promise of the *mahākavi* of the *Haravijaya*!
If he delights in my poem,
one who as a child is not a poet will,

[5] dhārākāvyaprabandhapraṇihitaparamā śrotapeyā kavīnāṃ
bhāṣāṣaṭke 'pi yasya kvacid api·na gatā bhāratī bhāravattvam/
prāptajñeyāvasānasphuradamalatarаprātibhajñānasampat
so'haṃ ratnākaras te sadasi kṛtapadaḥ kṣmāpa vāgīśvarāṅkaḥ//
In the first *pada* I have emended -praṇihitaparamaḥ to -praṇihitaparamā.

[6] yasyodaye'ndhatamasaṃ dahato viśuddhir
āvirbhavaty aniśam eva jalāśayānām/
tadgrastavāṅmayasamudram avehi rājan
ratnākaraṃ ravim athainam agastyam aurvam//
The difficult final *pada* is discussed below.

[7] dṛbdhaṃ satprajñakair yan na jagati kavibhir vastu tan nāsti kiṃ cit
kṣuṇṇe'kṣuṇṇatvacintāgahanaviṣayatā tasya dūrāstu tāvat/
tan mandābhipragalbhaprasaragurugirām agraṇīr bāṇa eko
rājan ratnākaraś ca jvalanavad avanau jājvalīti dvitīyaḥ//

by its virtue, become a poet,
and a poet will in due course become a great poet.[8]

Ratnākara addresses the young king his pupil, and concludes by exhorting him to take the *Haravijaya* as his guide. The hectoring and supremely self-confident tone adopted by Ratnākara is certainly that of teacher to pupil. How different is Māgha's *praśasti*, where three out of the four verses are concerned with his ancestry, and only the last verse mentions Māgha and his poem, in these modest terms:

In the vain hope of good poet's fame
his son has written this poem
entitled *Śiśupālavadha*,
marked by sarga-endings made delightful
by the word *śrī*,
beautiful only in that it describes
the deeds of Lakṣmī's lord.[9]

Several details in Ratnākara's statement call for comment and explanation. It is most interesting that he claims Bāṇa as his model, or at least forerunner. One would not otherwise have realized this; yet Ratnākara and Bāṇa do have something in common. It should be noted that Ratnākara mentions only Bāṇa, although in every other instance where a poet names names, more than one influence is mentioned. Thus Bāṇa in the introductory verses to his *Harṣacarita* refers approvingly to several poets, and Śivasvāmin confidently associates himself with Kālidāsa, Meṇṭha, and Daṇḍin. In naming only Bāṇa Ratnākara then appears to be showing an unusual degree of commitment to a model. I would suggest that Ratnākara is

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The second *pada* is obscure, and open to other interpretations. My version is dictated by the context: see the discussion at length below, pp. 114 ff. More literally, my translation is as follows: ‹in respect of that (i.e. *vastu*), away with the problem (*gahanaviṣayatā*), with the worry that there is banality (*kṣuṇṇatvacintā*) in the banal (*kṣuṇṇe*)›/ ‹let triviality of topic (*agahanaviṣayatā*) out of concern for novelty (*akṣuṇṇatvacintā*) in the well-trodden or banal (*kṣuṇṇe*) be far from that (i.e. *vastu*)›. *tasya* in the second sense is in accordance with Pāṇini 2.3.34.

[8] haravijayamahākaveḥ pratijñāṃ śṛṇuta kṛtapraṇayo mama prabandhe/
api śiśur akaviḥ kaviḥ prabhāvād bhavati kaviś ca mahākaviḥ krameṇa//

[9] śrīśabdaramyakṛtasargasamāptilakṣma
lakṣmīpateś caritakīrtanamātracāru/
tasyātmajaḥ sukavikīrtidurāśayādaḥ
kāvyaṃ vyadhatta śiśupālavadhābhidhānam//

envisaging a new tradition of poetry. Although Bāṇa himself praises those early poets so often praised, Kālidāsa, Hāla, Pravarasena, and also Bhāsa, for Ratnākara Bāṇa is the founder of a new movement. Ratnākara is not alone in taking this view of Bāṇa. His contemporary Abhinanda, author of the *Rāmacarita*, who was active in Bengal in the second half of the ninth century, likewise places himself in a tradition which begins with Bāṇa, though here a less exclusive tradition:

> That path where Bāṇa once had daily passed
> and which again was found by Bhavabhūti;
> which came to be well worn by Kamalāyudha
> and long was used by Keśaṭa;
> the dust of which was honoured by the touch
> of Śrī Vākpatirāja:
> by Grace of God that path still opens
> to a certain man of genius.[10]

We may further refer to Bhavabhūti's declaration at the beginning of his most original play:

> Those who scorn me in this world
> have doubtless special wisdom,
> so my writings are not made for them;
> but are rather with the thought that some day will be born,
> since time is endless and the world is wide,
> one whose nature is the same as mine.[11]

These poets—Bhavabhūti, Kamalāyudha, Keśaṭa, Vākpatirāja, and Abhinandha—share with Bāṇa an ability which Ratnākara

[10] *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 1733 (trans. Ingalls):
unnīto bhavabhūtinā pratidinaṃ bāṇe gate yaḥ purā
yaś cīrṇaḥ kamalāyudhena suciraṃ yenāgamat keśaṭaḥ/
yaḥ śrīvākpatirājapādarajasāṃ saṃparkapūtaś ciraṃ
diṣṭyā ślāghyaguṇasya kasya cid asau mārgaḥ samunmīlati//
Here the verse is attributed to Yogesvara; the anthology *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* of Śrīdharadāsa attributes it to Abhinanda. Abhinanda's authorship is supported by a verse in Soḍḍhala's *Udayasundarīkathā* which may be taken as linking Abhinanda, Vākpati, and Bāṇa, though Kālidāsa is also mentioned: see *Rāmacarita*, ed. K. S. Rāmaswāmī Śāstri Śiromani, G.O.S. XLVI (Baroda, 1930), p. ix.

[11] *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 1731 (*Mālatīmādhava* 1.8) (trans. Ingalls):
ye nāma ke cid iha naḥ prathayanty avajñāṃ
jānanti te kim api tān prati naiṣa yatnaḥ/
utpatsyate tu mama ko'pi samānadharmā
kālo hy ayaṃ niravadhir vipulā ca pṛthvī//

cannot be said to enjoy, namely graphically realistic description of nature.[12] Where he does join company with Bāṇa and the others is in the possession of a bold grandeur of vision.[13] To quote Ratnākara again on this point:

It was Bāṇa first led the way
with writings great in scope, gentle yet bold,
and O King! Ratnākara like a fire
blazes forth, a second such!

That Bāṇa's works are 'great in scope' is well known; the traditional saying goes that 'the whole universe is Bāṇa's leavings.'[14] Bāṇa's boldness is also referred to by Govardhana (twelfth century):

Just as in days of yore
Drupada's daughter
turned into the man Śikhaṇḍin,
so too, I would say,
the goddess of speech
became Bāṇa
to achieve the greater boldness.[15]

What Ratnākara means by 'slow' as applied to Bāṇa is made plain by a verse about Bāṇa by a certain Trilocana:

‹Though with Bāṇa progression is slow,
he goes to one's heart›/
‹one's step is slow

[12] Restricting reference for convenience to *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*; for Bāṇa see verses 203, 204, 1166, 1304; for Bhavabhūti, verses 215–18, 987, 1188, 1577, 1590, 1592; for Kamalāyudha (Vākpatirāja's teacher), verses 284, 299, 1587; for Keśaṭa, verse 512; for Vākpatirāja, verse 1155; and for Abhinanda, verses 173, 252, 282, 303, 304.

[13] I shall discuss this aspect of Bāṇa; while Bhavabhūti's plays bear ample witness, beyond the verse just quoted. For the others (except Kamalāyudha, for whom I must turn to Vallabhadeva's anthology *Subhāṣitāvali*, verse 3328) I refer again to *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*; for Keśaṭa, see 1193, 1195, 1198, 1210, 1212, 1510; for Vākpatirāja, see verse 104; and for Abhinanda, verse 1058. Kamalāyudha's boldness is atypical, though nonetheless real—he visualizes the fading away not only of kings and arrogant nobles but also of their poets and bards who are normally full of their own praise as preservers of their patrons' fame.

[14] bāṇocchiṣṭaṃ jagat sarvam.

[15] *Āryasaptaśatī* 33:

jātā śikhaṇḍinī prāg yathā śikhaṇḍī tathāvagacchāmi/
prāgalbhyam adhikam āptuṃ vāṇī bāṇo babhūveti//

Drupada's daughter Śikhaṇḍinī becomes a man to defeat the mighty Bhīṣma, the latter refusing to defend himself against one who is really a woman.

with an arrow sticking in one's heart!›
that's why other poets
seem as flurried as antelopes.[16]

In speaking of 'writings great in scope, slow yet bold' Ratnākara has provided helpful clues that will be followed up in chapter five, on the structure of his poem.

When Ratnākara calls himself a second Bāṇa he is alluding to and to some extent contradicting Bāṇa's bold claim in the final introductory verse to *Kādambarī* that his *kathā* is 'without a second' (*atidvayā*). What is particularly interesting is the notion of fire—'Ratnākara like a fire blazes forth, a second such!' The idea, surely, is of a fire restarting from its ashes: Ratnākara would have called himself a Phoenix, had he had the notion. The mention of fire reiterates the declaration made in the previous verse, the most extraordinary in the *praśasti*, and if I have understood it correctly, one of the most extraordinary claims ever made by any poet. It must be quoted again:

O King! know then that one on whose arising—burning blind darkness-
‹the lakes›/‹fools› exhibit ‹purity›/‹perfect wisdom›
to be Ratnākara who has swallowed the ocean of speech›;
and after him we may add
the sun, Agastya, and the submarine fire!

Our poet not only alludes to his royal pupil as a fool, but claims superiority to the sun, the sage Agastya, and the submarine fire.[17] Since Ratnākara is Ocean by name, and claims to blaze

[16] *Śarṅgadharapaddhati* 186:
hṛdi lagnena bāṇena yan mando'pi padakramaḥ/
bhavet kavikuraṅgāṇāṃ cāpalaṃ tatra kāraṇam//

[17] These latter three all drink the ocean, the sun doing so by evaporation. 'The sage Agastya, who was born miraculously from a water jar, is said in ancient times to have drunk up the ocean in order to help the gods against a race of demons who had hidden themselves there. The myth is used usually to exemplify greatness overcome by greater greatness...' Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 299. But Agastya as the star Canopus is also germane, since on its rising in the southern sky (towards the end of the monsoon) flood waters become clear and fit for drinking, a belief referred to in 20.80. The submarine fire 'is the Aurva or Vāḍava [Mare's] fire, which would have consumed the earth had not the ocean consented to guard it. It lies now beneath the waters, unquenchable despite the whirlpool that ever pours into it from above.' Ibid., p. 302. Ratnākara says in 16.17 that Agastya is superior to the Aurva fire because he swallows the ocean in one mouthful, whereas the fire continues drinking it until the *kalpa*'s end. That Agastya is clearly superior to the Aurva fire strongly supports the inference that Ratnākara, the sun, Agastya and the Aurva fire are mentioned in descending order of importance.

like a fire, is not this fire the fire of his genius burning within him as the submarine fire burns beneath the ocean? In the fourth verse of the *praśasti* Ratnākara claims possession of 'genius' or 'imagination' in terms more philosophical than literary,[18] but here in the fifth verse we are confronted by a grander, and older, notion. In the *Ṛgveda* fire is not only physical light but also 'the internal light which illumines seers and poets.'[19]

> The term 'light' is for instance also used in order to make the spiritual, priestly and poetical greatness of the celebrated family of the Vasiṣṭhas intelligible: [ṚV] 7, 33, 8 *sūryasyeva vakṣatho jyotir eṣāṃ samudrasyeva mahimā gabhīraḥ* 'their light is like the growth of the sun, (their) greatness deep like that of the ocean.'[20]

Compare the coincidence of sun and ocean here. Of course the linking of light with greatness continues—'according to common Indian tradition, a kind of fiery energy radiates from the bodies of great men'[21]—but the status of poets suffers a decline in later times.[22]

One poetician, the Jain Hemacandra (twelfth century), does talk of *pratibhā* in terms reminiscent of Ratnākara's references to fire and light: 'The soul is luminous by nature like the sun. But certain *karmas* (called *jñānāvaraṇīya-karmas*) veil it like a cloud and prevent it from shining. When they are removed (*kṣaya*) or suppressed (*upaśama*) Pratibhā bursts forth in splendour.'[23] Hemacandra's view of *pratibhā*, though in accord with general Indian philosophical thought, is especially that of Jainism. Bhavabhūti, however, sees Vedic connections for *pratibhā* when addressing Vālmīki: 'Your eye of vision (*Prātibhaṃ cakṣuḥ*) which is characteristic of a ṛṣi (*ārṣam*) is of irresistible light (*avyāhata-jyotiḥ*). You are the first poet (*kaviḥ*).'[24]

[18] 'Rich in the very pure shining intuitive knowledge' (sphuradamalatarapratibhajñānasampat so'haṃ ratnākaras).

[19] Gonda, *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*, p. 272.

[20] Ibid., p. 273.

[21] Ibid., p. 269.

[22] Entirely ordinary is Śivasvāmin's assertion that his poem is 'a veritable shooting light dispelling the intense gloom of ignorance': ajñānaghanāndhakārapaṭalaprekṣepadīpāṅkuraṃ, *Kapphiṇābhyudaya*, trans. Gauri Shankar, p. xxxix.

[23] T. N. Sreekantiya, 'Imagination in Indian Poetics', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 13, 1937, p. 80.

[24] *Uttararāmacarita* 2.5, trans. Gonda, *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*, p. 335.

Normally poetics does not talk of *pratibhā* in terms of light.[25] It is true that for instance Ānandavardhana speaks of *mahākavis*' genius as *parisphurantam*,[26] but this word means both 'throbbing' and 'glittering'. Basically it means becoming visible on account of movement. At all events, this kind of notion differs from the illuminating radiance of sun and fire. *Pratibhā* in poetics is closely tied up with *rasa*, and the throbbing of the one consorts well with the surging of the other. 'The creative intuition (*pratibhā*) is the force which makes the conversion of the feelings or passions into *rasa* possible, freeing them from the limitations of space and time.'[27] Ratnākara says of his verses, 'they pour forth in surges the *rasa* that is the rich nectar of bliss.'[28] Since Ratnākara swallows the ocean of speech, does he not pour forth *rasa* from within himself? This is how Bhaṭṭanāyaka (tenth-century Kashmiri poetician) sees the poetic process: 'The poet does not regurgitate *rasa* until he is completely filled with it.'[29] The same view is expressed more fully by Uttaṅgodaya (fourteenth century), with the addition, unique in Indian poetics, that the poet is a man out of his ordinary senses:

> First, by the stream that is *rasa*, to to be aesthetically enjoyed by the presentation of the *vibhāvas* etc. that are at the root of the poem he wishes to make, his own heart which is like a great and immeasurably deep lake (of *rasa*) becomes filled, then he becomes as if possessed by a planet, *as if mad*, and finally he pours out his poetry, and turns the listener, the sensitive reader (*sahṛdaya*), into the same (sort of madman as he has become).[30]

Does not Ratnākara exhibit megalomania in his claim to surpass the sun? But, moving on to discuss *rasa*, whereas Uttaṅgodaya,

[25] I speak only of poetics. It is interesting to note that Gnoli twice speaks of *pratibhā* as shining, when there is no reference at all to light: *The Aesthetic Experience*, p. XLVIII, rendering -satatoditapratibhā- (*Abhinavabhāratī* 1, 4) as 'continually shining', and p. LI, where he claims that the concept that 'in the poet, it burns with a purified light' is expressed in *Tantrāloka* XI, pp. 60–2, which it is not.

[26] *Dhvanyāloka* 1.6. Gonda, *Vedic Poets*, p. 329, translates, 'bursting forth'.

[27] Gonda, *Vedic Poets*, p. 344.

[28] Verse 3: sāndrāmṛtarasaparispandaniḥsyandinīnām asmadvācām.

[29] yāvat pūrṇo na caitena tāvan naiva vamaty amum, quoted in *Locana*, ed. Pathak, p. 88; translated by Masson and Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa*, p. 85.

[30] *Kaumudī* (a commentary on the *Locana*) in Kuppuswami Sastri's edition of the first Uddyota of *Dhvanyāloka* (Madras, 1944), p. 170; trans. Masson and Patwardhan, p. XII.

using the technical term *vibhāva*, 'determinant' or 'cause', restricts *rasa* as far as possible to its technical sense, as do all poeticians, poets speak more generally of *rasa* as nectar pure and simple. For example,

> What's the good of poetry
> which, «being mulled over»
> does not, like the ocean «being churned»
> release streams
> of *rasa*'s nectar?[31]

And the poets' view of the workings of *rasa* is unproblematic, quite unlike the anxious theorizings of the poeticians. Thus this verse of Vallabhadeva:

> When poetry goes straight to one's heart,
> what doesn't it do!
> It's like drinking deep of wine—
> through its *rasa* it thrills
> even those whose minds are filled with envy;
> shaking the head, reddening the cheeks,
> filling eyes with tears,
> lending one eloquence
> for one's keen to praise the subject-matter—
> one's made it one's own![32]

With good reason poets felt vulnerable to the nitpickings of critics, and responded by calling them knaves:

> A knave sets about listening
> to the poems of good poets
> by thinking in his heart,
> 'What fault can I find here.'[33]

Another instance, and one which returns to the pervasive theme of ocean:

[31] *Subhāṣitāvali* 133 (by Jayamādhava):
kiṃ tena kila kāvyena mṛdyamānasya yasya tāḥ/
udadher iva nāyānti rasāmṛtaparaṃparāḥ//

[32] Ibid., 163:
tat kiṃ kāvyam analpapītamadhuvat kuryān na yad dhṛdgataṃ
mātsaryāvṛtacetasāṃ rasavaśād apy udgatiṃ lomasu/
kampaṃ mūrdhni kapolayugmam aruṇaṃ bāṣpāvile locane
adhyāropitavastukīrtanaparaṃ vācaḥ karālambanam//

[33] Ibid., p. 141:
kva doṣo'tra mayā labhya iti saṃcintya cetasā/
khalaḥ kāvyeṣu sādhūnāṃ śravaṇāya pravartate//

Within the nectarous sea of good poetry
there's neither submarine fire
nor *kālakūṭa* poison.
Yet, strange to relate,
the supreme inconvenience to arise
is the knave plunging into it![34]

It must be admitted here that Ratnākara shows none of this becoming diffidence, roundly asserting that even the god of eloquence cannot fault his work.[35]

Ratnākara does make a punning connection between *rasa* and fire in this verse in praise of Śiva from the speech of the *gaṇa* Nandiṣeṇa:

When Śiva's third eye,
‹unfailingly ready to take fire›/
‹fully indicating the determinants of *rasa*›,
set ‹Kāma›/‹love› ablaze,
it attained the beauty of a work of literature
with manifest *śṛṅgāra rasa* in all its variety.[36]

There are of course real and well-known connections between Śiva's third eye and *pratibhā*, as is stated by Mahimabhaṭṭa (eleventh-century Kashmiri poetician):

Pratibhā is that intellectual function of the poet whose mind is concentrated (*stimita*) on thinking about words and meanings that are appropriate to *rasas*. It arises for a moment from the contact of the poet's mind with the essential nature (of the Ātman). It is that which makes the things that exist in all the three worlds seem as if they were right before our very eyes, and (hence) it is known as the third eye of Śiva.[37]

At this juncture Ratnākara's sixth verse may be brought into the discussion.

[34] *Sūktimuktāvalī* 4.26:
satkāvyapīyūṣasamudramadhye na vāḍavāgnir na ca kālakūṭaḥ/
tasyāvagāhena tathā'pi citraṃ khalasya tāpaḥ paramo'bhyudeti//

[35] Verse 2: 'even the mind of Vācaspati does not distrust the verses which I pour forth' (mamodgirato giro na khalu ... ceto vācaspater api śaṅkate).

[36] avipannavibhāvasūcitatvaṃ dadhad uddīpitamīnaketu cakṣuḥ/
śriyam āpad amuṣya citrabhedasphuṭaśṛṅgārarasaprabandhakalpam//15.49//

[37] *Vyaktiviveka* 2.117 and 118 (trans. Masson and Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa*, pp. 19 ff.):
rasānuguṇaśabdārthacintāstimitacetasaḥ/
kṣaṇaṃ svarūpasparśotthā prajñaiva pratibhā kaveḥ//
sā hi cakṣur bhagavatas tṛtīyam iti gīyate/
yena sākṣāt karoty eṣa bhāvāṃs trailokyavartinaḥ//

There is nothing in the world
that has not been written about
by poets excellently wise.
So one should not permit triviality of subject
out of concern for novelty
where there cannot be novelty.
Thus it was Bāṇa first led the way
with writings great in scope, slow yet bold,
and O King! Ratnākara like a fire
blazes forth, a second such!

Ratnākara eschews triviality of subject-matter, according to my translation. The word *agahana* is not recorded in the dictionaries, but it is a perfectly natural formation. The word *gahana* does not seem to be used by the poeticians in any technical sense; it is, however, used with reference to literary matters by Māgha in a verse already cited in another context. Māgha uses *gahana*, 'profound', and a very similar word, *durvigāha*, 'unfathomable':

Briefly sleeping and then awake,
for the kingdom as for a poem,
great and unfathomable as the ocean,
kings like poets ponder their plans;
their minds are clear
in the early dawn
and they reflect upon the profound problem
of ‹the ends of man›/‹the variety of meanings›.[38]

As the mention of the ocean here serves to remind us, Ratnākara's name or *nom de plume* means Ocean, which is surely good reason for him to seek profundity. There could conceivably be a direct reference to Ratnākara's profundity in this verse of Vallaṇa's, where Ingalls chooses to translate *ratnākara* as 'the mine of gems, the ocean', rather than 'the ocean, Ratnākara':

How should young ears that have been led astray
by flattering shallowness
respect that art of poetry that would put
in every word the substance of the universe?

[38] *Śiśupālavadha* 11.6 (quoted above, p. 138):
kṣaṇaśayitavibuddhāḥ kalpayantaḥ prayogān
udadhimahati rājye kāvyavad durvigāhe/
gahanam apararātraprāptabuddhiprasādāḥ
kavaya iva mahīpāś cintayanty arthajātam//

How should the ocean, Ratnākara,
whose majesty was such that Mount Maināka
submerged within its smallest fish's mouth,
be plumbed by those whose great deed was no more
than fathoming a puddle by the road?[39]

This comes in a section of Vidyākara's anthology entitled 'Praise of poets', and the next verse but one is probably in praise of Ratnākara.[40] Whether or not Vallaṇa refers to Ratnākara, he is certainly praising the kind of poetry that Ratnākara claims to write, poetry that is 'great in scope'.

The expression *-prasaragurugirām*, which, as we have seen, accords with Bāṇa's established reputation, is the key to the difficult sixth verse. Bāṇa led the way in writing poetry 'great in scope', and Ratnākara followed him. This much is clear. And it empowers us to deal with the tissue of uncertainties that make up the second *pada* of the verse: *akṣuṇṇatva-* or *kṣuṇṇatva-*, *agahana* or *gahana*, not to speak of yet other possibilities. The first word of the *pada, kṣuṇṇe*, is clear, 'in what is well-trodden.' Now, given what follows, Ratnākara cannot be expressing satisfaction with what is 'well-trodden', for he differentiates himself and Bāṇa from all other poets. He cannot, for instance, be saying that one should not worry about repeating old themes; nobody did

[39] *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 1704 (trans. Ingalls, altered as stated):

uttānollapitapratāritanavaśrotraiḥ kathaṃ bhāvyatāṃ
vākpratyaṃśaniveśitākhilajagattattvā kavīnāṃ kalā/
rathyāgartavigāhanādbhutakṛtair gāhyaḥ kva ratnākaro
yasyāntaḥśapharādhamānanataṭīmajjadgirīndrāḥ śriyaḥ//

('The mountains of this earth ... once had wings, but their wings were clipped by Indra.... One mountain, it is said, escaped from Indra uninjured. This was Maināka, the son of Himālaya and Menā, who flew to the sea where he transformed himself into a crab.' Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 337.)

[40] Ibid., 1706 (trans. Ingalls):

This world, in which the sun of Bhāravi has set,
which is deprived of the moon of Kālidāsa by force of time,
and in which the lamp of Bāṇa has gone out,
has been illumined by a gem [Ratna].

astaṃgatabhāravi kālavaśāt kālidāsavidhuvidhuram/
nirvāṇabāṇadīpaṃ jagad idam adyoti ratnena//

Ingalls observes, 'The word *ratna* must be part of an author's name'; Ratnākara is the only well-known author with *ratna* in his name, and the *Haravijaya* is several times quoted in the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* of Bhojadeva, to whom this verse is attributed by Śrīdharadāsa. Note the association with Bāṇa.

worry about this except Bāṇa and Ratnākara, who solved what to them was a problem by writing 'poetry great in scope'.

Ratnākara's special view of *pratibhā* must here be noted: he says he is 'rich in the very pure shining intuitive knowledge that reaches the limit of what can be known' (verse 4). In as much as he and Bāṇa are set apart from all poets, presumably Ratnākara does not see himself simply as a poet 'excellently wise', *sat-prajñaka*, of whom there are more than two, and surely many:

> There is nothing in the world
> that has not been written about
> by poets excellently wise.[41]

Poets have written about everything. Normally there is complacency about the ground being well-trodden:

> The same old words, the same old subjects,
> yet the poem's new
> thanks to the poet's skill in composing.[42]

Ānandavardhana expresses this in his own poetry:

> There's no end to them
> and repetitions are never seen:
> those charms of mistresses and meanings of good poets.[43]
>
> Though the subjects have been seen before,
> when they acquire *rasa*
> they all look new
> like trees in spring.[44]

Here we have the poets' view of *rasa* rather than that of poetics—*rasa* as a vivifying sap which gives new life to tired subjects. Properly, it is imagination, *pratibhā*, which ever renews

[41] dṛbdhaṃ satprajñakair yan na jagati kavibhir vastu tan nāsti kiṃ cit...

[42] Quoted as a 'well-known saying' by T. N. Sreekantiya, ' "Imagination" in Indian Poetics', pp. 59–84, p. 73. (I have translated the first line very freely):

ta eva padavinyāsās ta evārthavibhūtayaḥ/
tathāpi navyaṃ bhavati kāvyaṃ grathanakauśalāt//

[43] *Dhvanyāloka*, ed. Pathak, p. 585:

ṇa a tāṇa ghaḍai ohī ṇa a te dīsanti kaha vi punaruttā/
je vibbhamā piāṇaṃ atthā vā sukaivāṇīṇam//

[44] Ibid., 4.4, ed. Pathak, p. 567:

dṛṣṭapūrvā api hy arthāḥ kāvye rasaparigrahāt/
sarve navā ivābhānti madhumāsa iva drumāḥ//

the old themes. Bhaṭṭatauta's (late ninth-century Kashmiri, teacher of dramatic theory to Abhinavagupta) is the most quoted definition of *pratibhā* with regard to poetry: '*Pratibhā* is that intuitive consciousness which delineates forms always new.'[45] It is *pratibhā* that enables poets to go on for ever writing about the standard themes. The subject-matter of poetry is everlasting:

> Thousands upon thousands of Vācaspatis
> busily composing
> could not exhaust the range of poetic themes—
> no more than can be the nature of the universe.[46]

This is not what Ratnākara is saying, and the question arises as to what he can mean by 'excellently wise'. The conventional stance would be: everything that can be written about has been, but this is of no consequence because poets possessing *pratibhā* can always express things in new ways. Ratnākara, however, is surely saying that 'excellently wise' poets have reached an impasse. Therefore, by the expression *satprajñaka* he either means something other than *pratibhā* or he is attacking the notion of *pratibhā*. *Prajñā* can be applied to mere intellect as distinct from genius,[47] but Ratnākara would have been aware of the Dhvanikārikākāra's view of *pratibhā* as a cure-all for *kṣuṇṇatva*, detrition, and perhaps of Ānandavardhana's, and I think he is criticizing such a view here. If *satprajñaka* does refer to *pratibhā*, *sat-* and probably also *-ka* are sarcastic.[48] It makes no sense

[45] prajñā navanavollekhaśālinī pratibhā. The translation offered by Masson and Patwardhan is an instance of the tendency to describe *pratibhā* in terms of light regardless of the Sanskrit text: 'Poetic imagination is that [form of] intelligence which shines with ever new scintillation.' (*Śāntarasa*, p. 18).

[46] *Dhvanyāloka* 4.10 (ed. Pathak, p. 593):

> vācaspatisahasrāṇāṃ sahasrair api yatnataḥ/
> nibaddhā sā kṣayaṃ naiti prakṛtir jagatām iva//

[47] Cf. a verse quoted by Vidyādharacakravartin in his commentary on the *Kāvyaprakāśa* (Trivandrum ed. Part 1, p. 14):

> dve vartmanī girāṃ devyāḥ śāstraṃ ca kavikarma ca/
> prajñopajñaṃ tayor ādyaṃ pratibhodbhavam antimam//

[48] On *-ka* see Renou, *Grammaire Sanscrite*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1968), p. 245, where he points out that 'la valeur diminutive' of *ka* can have 'la nuance péjorative'.

to speak of 'good' or 'excellent' genius without some further intention, for genius transcends good and bad according to its own terms of reference. I think Ratnākara here intends a distinction between two sorts of *pratibhā*, one literary only and inferior, the other the omniscience of the enlightened, to which he himself lays claim—'I Ratnākara, rich in the very pure shining intuitive knowledge that reaches the limit of what can be known.' Bhaṭṭatauta was aware of this distinction, and in a passage quoted by Hemacandra attempts to interpret it in the poet's favour, saying that Vālmīki, as a sage, had very clear vision, but did not become a poet until he described what he saw—poets are always *ṛṣis*.[49] But this is true only of the Vedic poets, not of court poets. The *pratibhā* of the poets is not that of *yogins*;[50] the *prajñā* that is *pratibhā* can only be a subsidiary of that *prajñā* simultaneously aware of past, present and future.

Naturally, *kāvya* wishes to affirm its own importance. Bhaṭṭanāyaka, another of Abhinavagupta's teachers, asserts,

> The cow in the form of speech gives a unique drink (*rasa*) out of love for her young. That (*rasa* i.e. bliss) which is (laboriously) milked by the Yogins cannot be compared to it.[51]

Despite the contention of Mahimabhaṭṭa, cited earlier, that the poet touches the heart of things,[52] and despite Vāmana's use of the yogic term *samādhi*, poets as such are content with a lesser destiny. They satisfy themselves with the variations of women's looks and changing foliage of trees. Such themes as these are *kāvya*'s stamping-ground, an area fenced in by the constrictions of propriety (*aucitya*).

[49] *Kāvyānuśasana*, ed. Parikh, Vol. 1, p. 433: tathā cāha Bhaṭṭatotaḥ [sic]:
nānṛṣiḥ kavir ity uktam ṛṣiś ca kila darśanāt/....
tathā hi darśane svacche nitye'py ādikaver muneḥ/
noditā kavitā loke yāvaj jātāna varṇanā//

[50] That of the yogin gives omniscience: *Yogasūtra* 3.33, pratibhād vā sarvam.

[51] *Locana*, ed. Pathak, p. 93 (trans. Masson and Patwardhan, p. 23):
yad āha Bhaṭṭanāyakaḥ vāgdhenur dugdha etaṃ hi rasaṃ yad bālatṛṣṇayā/
tena nāsya samaḥ sa syād duhyate yogibhir hi yaḥ//
The translators have chosen not to translate *yad* and *tena*, 'since' and 'therefore'; and seem to read *ekaṃ* for *etam* (the reading of Kuppuswami Sastri's ed. of the first *uddyota*) though citing the text as I have given it.

[52] See above, p. 133: kṣaṇaṃ svarūpasparśotthā prajñaiva pratibhā kaveḥ—note kṣanam: the poet's contact is only brief.

Bāṇa and Ratnākara broke new ground by achieving 'greatness of scope'. Bāṇa demands,

> What's the use of any poet's poetry
> if his muse doesn't pervade the three worlds
> like the Bhārata story,
> if it doesn't
> go to the limits of metrical skill›/
> ‹concern itself with all of life›.[53]

Just as the world is inadequate for Bāṇa's women, so too for Bāṇa himself. In *Kādambarī*, Patralekhā says,

> ... when tender women are possessed by him [Kāma], they gaze, and the sky is crowded with a thousand images of their beloved. They paint the loved form; the earth is a canvas all too small. They reckon the virtues of their hero; number itself fails them. They listen to talk about their dearest; the Goddess of Speech herself seems all too silent. They muse on the joys of union with him who is their life; and time itself is all too short to their heart.[54]

Bāṇa transcends the everyday world, and is aware that in this he differs from other poets:

> In every house there are [poetasters] like dogs,
> beyond number,
> ‹following their own vile nature›/
> ‹giving only bald descriptions›;
> there aren't many poets like *śarabhas*
> ‹with legs on their backs›/
> ‹possessing creative power›.[55]

The way in which Ratnākara sets out to achieve greatness of

[53] *Harṣacarita, Ucchvāsa* 1, verse 9, ed. Kane, p. 1:
kiṃ kaves tasya kāvyena sarvavṛttāntagāminī/
katheva bhāratī yasya na vyāpnoti jagattrayam//

[54] *Kādambarī*, ed. Vaidya, p. 236, lines 4–8 (trans. Ridding, p. 202): api cānenādhiṣṭhitānāṃ kāminīnāṃ paśyantīnāṃ cintāpriyamukhacandrasahasrāṇi saṃkaṭam ambaratalam, likhantīnāṃ dayitākārān avistīrṇaṃ mahīmaṇḍalam, gaṇayantīnāṃ vallabhaguṇān alpīyasī saṃkhyā, śṛṇvantīnāṃ priyatamakathām abahubhāṣiṇī sarasvatī, dyāyantīnāṃ prāṇasamasamāgamasukhāni hrasīyān kālo hṛdayasyāpatati.

[55] *Harṣacarita, Ucchvāsa* 1, verse 5, ed. Kane, p. 1 (trans. Cowell and Thomas [slightly altered], p. 1):
santi śvāna ivāsaṃkhyā jātibhājo gṛhe gṛhe/
utpādakā na bahavaḥ kavayaḥ śarabhā iva//
As Cowell and Thomas note, the *śarabha* is a fabulous animal, having eight legs, four of which are said to grow on its back.

scope is very different from Bāṇa. Although Bāṇa sneers at naturalistic description (*jāti*), he is in fact extremely good at it. We may contrast here Ratnākara's long and beautiful hymn to the dread goddess Caṇḍī with Bāṇa's account of the priest of the same goddess, a ludicrous figure who gets tossed in a blanket, to cite only one of the many highly circumstantial details. To refer again to the saying that 'the whole universe is Bāṇa's leavings', it is only phenomenal worlds that Bāṇa is concerned with. Ratnākara speaks freely of first and last things, and attains a unique grandeur of vision within *kāvya*. In his sixth *sarga* he speaks of Paramaśiva, the one who is 'beyond both sorts of *pratibhā*',[56] literary and philosophical.

Both types of *pratibhā* are clearly exemplified in this famous statement of William Blake's:

> 'What,' it will be Question'd, 'When the Sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea?' O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.'[57]

Although the comparison of the sun to a guinea is intended by Blake as a commonsensical idea, it is in Indian literary terms an instance of the operation of literary *pratibhā* upon the theme of the sun. Indeed it is typical of the way Sanskrit poets demonstrate a contemptuous superiority to phenomena. Despite their originality, both Bāṇa and Ratnākara do of course have a great deal in common with all other Sanskrit poets, and much of their work is in the standard pattern. And thus Ratnākara compares the sun and moon to a pair of cymbals (19.5); and the sun to a lover, moving from one quarter of the sky to another because of a new love affair (3.3); and, secular irony, conceives the sun to frustrate the devotions of his own devotees, the Vālakhilyas, by the rattling of his chariot wheels over the rocks on lofty Mount Mandara (4.25). But like Blake seeing the Heavenly host, Ratnākara too reaches the limit of the knowable, and with yogic *pratibhā* sees the sun as Śiva and the Vedas:

> In this glorious disc composed of the recited *ṛc* verses,
> its rays the sung *sāman* verses,
> in this disc of the sun whose pure self

[56] 6.168.
[57] *The Writings of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1925), Vol. 3, p. 162.

is composed of the three Vedas
you, mysterious in the divisions of your manifestation,
shine forth as the muttered *yajus* verses.[58]

Manifestly only one
with many names,
yellow in form and radiant,
undertaking varied actions,
making the days, seasons, half-years, years and so on,
it is you alone who heat the world.[59]

This discussion of Ratnākara's more remarkable pronouncements must here suffice. Also worthy of further notice is what he has to say about the language of his poem:

2 ... the verses which I pour forth,
sweet and lovely, provided with *alaṃkāras*,
delightfully clear
[and yet] unrestrained in the sections of difficult *yamaka* and *śleṣa*,
unequalled in the way of *citra*.[60]

3 There is a wonderful beauty of sound in our verses...[61]

4 My eloquence ... is never burdensome,
even where six languages are used at once...[62]

We gather that Ratnākara's language is easy, but at times is difficult. I shall deal first with the difficulties; one of these difficulties is *śleṣa*, and Ratnākara's fondness for this is his most obvious resemblance to Bāṇa.

Ratnākara says that he is unrestrained (*nirargala*) at times in difficult (*vikaṭa*) *yamaka* and *śleṣa*. Obviously, the poeticians did not like poets' being unrestrained. Ānandavardhana allows poets to be spontaneous (*kāmacāra*) only when there is

[58] śriyam ṛṅmaye dadhati sāmadīdhitau
taraṇes trayīmayanirāmayātmanaḥ/
pratibhāsabhedagahano'vabhāsase
tvam aṇur yajūṃṣi puruṣo'tra maṇḍale/ /6.67/ /

[59] sphuṭam eka eva vividhākhyatāṃ dadhad
dharimūrtir āśritapṛthagvidhakriyaḥ/
jagatīṃ dinartvayanahāyanādikaṃ
vidadhat tvam eva vitapasy abhīśumān/ /6.68/ /

[60] lalitamadhurāḥ sālaṃkārāḥ prasādamanoramā vikaṭayamakaśleṣoddhāraprabandhanirargalāḥ/asadṛśagatīś citre mārge mamodgirato giro...

[61] asmadvācām ... ko'pi ṭāṅkāraṭaṅkaḥ/ /

[62] bhāṣāṣaṭke'pi yasya kvacid api na gatā bhāratī bhāravattvam/

no question of *rasa*,[63] and poetry without *rasa* is not really poetry. But freedom is essential to good poetry, however the poet chooses to use it. Ratnākara once mentions (punningly!) 'freely roaming (*kāmacara*) bards who drive away all care'[64]—his own freedom is employed in making his verse and also the nature of reality complex. But the theory of *rasa* is simplistic. The unrestrained poet can attain remarkable subtleties of emotion. For example:

> This mountain-top has the beauty
> of King Janaka's daughter:
> ‹its growth of delightful *kuśa* grass plain to see›/
>   ‹mother of the very remarkable and delightful Kuśa›,
> ‹undisturbed by birds›/
>   ‹unviolated›,
> ‹good fortune attends the dwellings here
> for they are the rendezvous of sages›/
>   ‹she who settled down beautifully in the sage's house›,
> ‹with its bright buds of Alangium Hexapetalum›/
>   ‹with Lava prattling in her shining lap›.[65]

Ratnākara is unrestrained and difficult in this verse, and would presumably have annoyed Ānandavardhana with this along with many other verses. And yet it is excellent poetry. The conjunction of mighty mountain and frail woman is in fact in no way perverse. Sītā is only Janaka's adopted daughter. Her name means 'furrow'; she arose from a furrow of the earth. Her offspring are thus naturally compared, or rather juxtaposed, to the plants growing on the mountain. The mountain rises higher even than the birds just as Sītā rises high above common morality by withstanding the advances of the demon king Rāvaṇa and remaining 'unviolated'. Sages seek the purity of the mountain; so too did Sītā, spurned by Rāma, seek the purity of Vālmīki's hermitage. In the course of reading the verse one discovers the double meaning, the verse is more complex than

[63] *Dhvanyāloka, vṛtti* ad 3.6, ed. Pathak, yadā kavir apagatarasabhāvo vaktā tadā racanāyāḥ kāmacāraḥ. See also pp. 356 ff.

[64] 5 75: vyudastanānādhikāmacaramāgadharājitaśrīḥ.

[65] spaṣṭābhilakṣyaramaṇīyakuśaprasūtir
  avyāhatā muniniketakṛtāspadaśrīḥ/
sānusthitir janakarājasuteva bhāsvad-
  aṅkollapallavatayā śriyam eti yasya/ /4.23/ /
I have followed the commentator in taking *niketa* to mean also '*saṃketa*'.

one supposed at first sight, but the two meanings complement and strengthen each other. Of course the mountain is the remotest of images, and the mother and child closest to the human heart—but they are blended!

An extreme example of Ratnākara's *yamakas*, a *mahāyamaka*, two verses made up of identical syllables is given below. These verses form one sentence with a third verse, but all we need to know here is that a mountain, Mount Mandara, is being described:

It fosters sacrifices;
there's gleaming gold there;
it produces rows of myrobalan trees
and turmeric and Terminalia Tomentosa trees
and Coryphas;
herds of young must elephants
smash open its really juicy Grislea Tomentosas;
old age cannot conquer the creatures here;
It's shapely;
its Vangueria Spinosa are shooting up;
it's got woods of continuous Dalbergia Ujjeinensis
along with nutmeg and Flacourtia cataphracta;
there the best of lords are in passion's thrall,
quite infatuated;
the Pongamia Glabra rise high;
O it's all just splendid![66]

Ānandavardhana singles out *yamaka* (sometimes translated as 'Rhyme', or 'Chime') for special criticism—this figure above all impedes *rasa*. All the poet's energy is expended on finding words to fit.[67] But poetry is often better when the poet does not give himself up entirely to producing a particular effect on the reader or listener. In these two verses, concentrating on the sounds and

[66] sava-puṣam utkara-hāṭakam akṣa-tati-niśā-asana-aga-tālī-savanam/
sa-mada-nava-śakalita-atanu-rasa-dhava-nāga-utkaraṃ-jarā-ajita-sattvam//5.141

sa-vapuṣam ut-karahāṭakam akṣata-tiniśa-sa-nāga-tālīsa-vanam/
sa-madana-vaśa-kalita-atanu-rasa-dhava-nāga-ut-karañja-rājita-sattvam//5.142//

This is a *mahāyamaka* according to Rudraṭa's example (*Kāvyālaṃkāra* 3.18 and 19), not Daṇḍin's (defined and illustrated *Kāvyādarśa* 3.70 and 71).

[67] *Dhvanyāloka*, *vṛtti* ad 2.16, ed. Pathak, p. 233 f.: yamake ca prabandhena buddhir pūrvakaṃ kriyamāṇe niyamenaiva yatnāntaraparigraha āpatati śabdaviśeṣānveṣaṇarūpaḥ.... na teṣāṃ [alaṃkārāntarānām] bahiraṅgatvaṃ rasābhivyaktau. yamakaduṣkaramārgeṣu tu tatsthitam eva.

leaving the meaning to take care of itself leads to, as often with Ratnākara's *yamakas*, very interesting poetry, which could almost be called modern in tone. In my translation I have turned the adjectival compounds out of which both verses are formed into sentences. These compounds are each so charged with meaning because of the compression required for the sound effect that they easily and naturally form sentences in English. *Yamakas*, and other extreme *śabdālaṃkāras* (figures of sound and shape), often produce a patchwork of meaning quite unlike the usual unity of *kāvya* verse.

In these two verses very varied things are interspersed between the names of trees. Beginning with the sacrifices of the *vānaprasthas*, or anchorites, who have retired to the peace of its slopes, we move on to the gold, the mineral wealth, that feature of mountains which is of greatest significance to the city-dweller. After the trees we have the lust and greed of elephants. In the close of the verse, 'old age cannot conquer the creatures here', anchorite and elephant meet together in defying death. In the second verse the forces of nature predominate, beauty, passion, and above all the growth of trees.

I shall pass quickly over the other 'difficulties'. Ratnākara uses six languages at once in only one verse;[68] and *citrabandhas* (pattern or picture verses) less than a score of times.[69] I do not propose to discuss whether or not there is 'a wonderful beauty of sound' in Ratnākara's poetry; he uses many metres,[70] and such an inquiry would require another book. Kṣemendra notes the skill with which Ratnākara uses the Vasantatilaka metre.[71] Sound is, of course, very important in Sanskrit poetry.

[68] 4.35. This verse is a *hhāṣāṣaṭkasamāveśa*, wherein words common to Sanskrit, Prākṛit, Māgadha, Paiśācī, Śūrasenī, and Apabhraṃśa are used. Cf. Rudraṭa, *Kāvyālaṃkāra*, 4.23.

[69] See below, pp. 135 ff.

[70] For a list of the metres in the *Haravijaya*, see H. D. Velankar, 'Prosodial Practice of Sanskrit Poets', *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Vol. 24–5, 1948–9, pp. 42–92, and 76–8.

[71] *Suvṛttatilaka* 3.32:

vasantatilakārūḍhā vāgvallī gāḍhasaṅginī/
ratnākarasyotkalikā cakāsty ānanakānane//

Trans. Sūryakānta, *Kṣemendra Studies* (Poona, 1954), p. 204: 'The speech in the form of a creeper, which climbs the Vasantatilakā and embraces it closely and has buds coming forth, looks bright in the garden of Ratnākara's eloquence.'

Rājaśekhara went so far as to declare that reading out poetry properly is more difficult than composing it.[72]

Ratnākara applies the word *lalita*, 'lovely', to his own poetry no less than three times. In the first verse here he calls his poem 'a lovely composition' (*lalitabandha*); in the second verse he says his verses (*giraḥ*) are lovely (*lalita*); and in the concealed verse within 46.71 and 72[73] he says his poem is 'marked with loveliness' (*lalitāṅka*). Neither *lalita* nor its abstraction, *lālitya*, appear to be used by the poeticians as technical terms, except by Bharata, who says that in drama the style of language should be 'noble' (*udāra*), 'sweet' (*madhura*), 'soft' (*mṛdu*), and *lalita*. Ingalls in his study of words for beauty in *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* has this to say about *lalita*: ' "graceful, delicate, charming", often with reference to motion but by no means always; past participle of *lal* "to move freely, to play, dally". ... To judge from *P.W. lalita* is used especially of motions (gesticulation, gait), objects which are slender (finger, arm, torso) and speech (words, story, conversation).'[74] Ratnākara appears to use *lalita* in his poem almost solely in respect of motion, above all with reference to dance-movements.[75] In addition to often referring to dancing, the poem is about the dancing god, Naṭarāja, and his special *tāṇḍava* dance is described in the second *sarga*. *Lalita* may thus be seen as an appropriate epithet for the *Haravijaya*.

The fact that the poem is provided with *alaṃkāras* does not call for comment.[76] The two terms remaining to be discussed

[72] *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, G.O.S. ed., p. 33, lines 1 and 2:

karoti kāvyaṃ prāyeṇa saṃskṛtātmā yathā tathā/
paṭhituṃ vetti sa paraṃ yasya siddhā sarasvatī//

Stchoupak and Renou do not, I think, give the correct emphasis in their translation (*La Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, Paris, 1944, p. 109 f.): 'Comme la poésie se crée d'ordinaire d'un esprit tout formé, ainsi il sait réciter celui qui possède parfaitement le langage.' I take *yathā tathā* to be equivalent to *yathātatham*, and *paraṃ* as adversative. Any cultivated person can write poetry after a fashion, but to know how to recite it requires special powers. The translators themselves refer to a verse (*Sūktimuktāvalī* 4.111) which says that to have *siddhā sarasvatī* is to be truly remarkable; to have in fact mastered virtually all the famous poets, the list ending with kāntaś ca Ratnākaraḥ: siddhā yasya sarasvatī yadi bhavet ke tasya sarve'pi te//

[73] Quoted above, p. 45 fn. 48.

[74] 'Words for Beauty in Classical Sanskrit Poetry', *Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown* (New Haven, 1962), pp. 87–107, pp. 103 ff.

[75] Thus, -lalitābhinayaprapañca- (2.21); lalitanartanavibhrama- (2.22); lalitāṅgahāraśobhā (2.54); salalitanāṭyacitrabhittīr (17.96).

[76] For some general remarks about *alaṃkāras*, see below, pp. 213 ff.

are 'sweet' (*madhura*) and 'delightfully clear' (*prasādamanorama*). Sweetness (*mādhurya*) and clarity (*prasāda*) are commonly included by poeticians in their lists of the excellences (*guṇa*) of poetry. The poetician Bhāmaha spoke only of three *guṇas*: *mādhurya, prasāda*, and *ojas* ('forcefulness'), and he is followed in this restriction of the *guṇas* to three by Ānandavardhana, who, however, relates them to *rasas*. It so happens that Māgha in the *Śiśupālavadha* twice mentions *ojas* and *prasāda* with reference to poetry.[77] In the course of his learned discussion of the history of *guṇas*, Raghavan takes it for granted that Māgha had the same three *guṇas* in mind: 'Māgha omits Mādhurya, evidently because it is of general importance.'[78] However, if we assume that Māgha knew of *mādhurya, prasāda*, and *ojas* as the three *guṇas* generally considered the most important in poetry, perhaps he does not mention *mādhurya* because he personally does not value it as highly as the other two. Similarly, as Ratnākara mentions *mādhurya* and *prasāda* but not *ojas* he might not personally consider *ojas* to be important. To reduce the two poets to single verses, the breaking of twigs and plucking of flowers referred to in the Introduction,[79] Māgha clearly shows *ojas*, and Ratnākara, I think, does not. Nevertheless, such terms as sweetness and clarity cannot help us understand the *Haravijaya*. They are too vague, and yet given such varied interpretation and importance by the poeticians that technical reference would cloud all sight of poetry.

Goethe when asked what idea he had tried to represent by his play *Torquato Tasso*, replied, 'Idea! as if I knew anything about it ...'[80] And similarly wth regard to *Faust*: 'They come and ask what idea I meant to embody in my *Faust*; as if I knew myself, and could inform them.'[81] Though Ratnākara's view of the *Haravijaya* has not taken us very far forward, it would have been unreasonable to have expected any greater help from the poem's creator.

[77] *Śiśupālavadha* 2.83; 12.35.

[78] *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāra Prakāśa*, p. 260.

[79] See above, pp. 9 ff.

[80] J. P. Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe*, trans. John Oxenford, Everyman ed. (London, 1930), p. 205.

[81] Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

The Structure of the *Haravijaya*

You can usually find a use for something small—
what's the point of big things human beings can't handle?
. . .
A jewel is best,
shattering the mass of darkness
with the rays it emits:
though small, its value is very great.
What can we do with the boulders on the mountains,
huge, and lustreless?[1]

Thus the *gaṇa*-lord Agnidaṃṣṭra, 'Fire-fang', addresses the assembly of Śiva. Did the author of the longest *mahākāvya* intend some irony in these words? When Keith condemned the *Haravijaya* for its 'utter lack of proportion'[2] he meant that it was much too long, in itself and in all its parts. I shall try to reveal the shape of the poem as a whole, and also look at the shapes of *sargas* and verses. I hope above all to show that the *Haravijaya* is harmoniously proportioned.

The poem has six sections.[3] The first section (*sargas* 1 to 6) sets the scene. Only at the close is Andhaka's oppression of the world made known to Śiva and the reader. *Sargas* 7 to 16 portray the fury of Śiva's assembly at the news; the *gaṇa*-lords state their

[1] kāryaṃ bhavet kvacana kiṃcid aṇīyasāpi
sthūlair alaṃ tanubhṛtām upayogavandhyaiḥ/ ... //11.65//
niṣṭyūtadīdhitiśikhādalitāndhakāra-
rāśir varaṃ maṇir asau tanur apy anarghaḥ/
kṣoṇībhṛtāṃ kaṭakavartmani kiṃ nu kṛtyam
aṃśuśriyā virahitair nanu gaṇḍaśailaiḥ//11.66//

[2] Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 135.

[3] To a certain extent, these sections seem to be marked out by changes of *sarga* length: *sargas* 1–6 are of 64, 64, 94, 41, 151, 197 verses respectively. *Sargas* 7–16 are of 64, 52, 76, 52, 76, 81, 83, 60, 68, 82 verses. *Sargas* 17–28 have 114, 65, 101, 68, 86, 58, 65, 50, 71, 93, 116, 119 verses; *Sargas* 29–31 have 63, 94, 62 verses; *Sargas* 32–8 have 118, 47, 67, 62, 61, 68, 91 verses; *Sargas* 39–50 have 54, 65, 65, 51, 385, 70, 58, 81, 170, 148, 58, 95 verses. Apart from the last two sections, perhaps because of breakdown of order in time of war, either the beginning or end of each section is signalled by *sargas* with verses in three figures.

views. The angry turmoil is abated by the decision to send an envoy to Andhaka. The following section, *sargas* 17 to 28, finds the inhabitants of Śiva's heaven on Mount Mandara free for their no doubt customary round of pleasure. The short fourth section of only three *sargas* continues in the gentle afterglow of the third section: Śiva is woken, the envoy despatched, his route described and so too the delights of Indra's conquered heaven. The fifth section, rather like the second but more dramatic, contains the envoy's appearance in Andhaka's assembly and the speeches made. Lastly, there are eleven *sargas* of battle, and shortly before Śiva's final victory a *sarga* in praise of Caṇḍī.

In closer focus the work may be seen as follows. After three benedictory stanzas to Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Brahmā respectively, in the first *sarga* Śiva's city on Mount Mandara is described, in terms no different than for a human city. For the second half of the *sarga* Śiva himself is described. He is not said to be present in any part of the city; he is pictured according to the standard iconography of *kāvya*. In the second *sarga* Ratnākara describes a particular performance of the *tāṇḍava* dance, localizing Śiva and impressing the divine presence upon the reader or listener. In the third *sarga* the seasons, who come and worship Śiva, are described, and thus calm and relaxation are provided after the divine frenzy of the dance. Śiva and Pārvatī are then said to look upon the mountain, which, in the fourth *sarga*, is described in predominantly mythical terms: the first half of the *sarga* is concerned with its role in the churning of the ocean, the second half with its use as Śiva's bow when he destroyed Tripura; also, its position is related to the heavenly bodies. After this short *sarga*, the description of Mandara is continued in a long *sarga* wherein Nandin pictures to his master the flowers, animals, and human and semi-divine persons on the mountain.

There is a definite rhythm in this first section of the poem, a rhythm that takes the form of alternation between the divine and the non-divine. It is found within the first *sarga*, half of which is about the city, Jyotsnāvatī, and is, relatively speaking, human in tone; the other half, about Śiva, is divine. The rhythm then proceeds at the level of the *sarga*: *sarga* 2, divine; *sarga* 3, non-divine: nature; *sarga* 4, divine: myth; *sarga* 5, non-divine: nature. This rhythm ends with the sixth *sarga* (divine), which concludes the first section with a hymn to Śiva of devout and philosophical praise.

Another movement is readily to be seen in this first section, a movement that is so to speak centrifugal. The *sargas*, which are, predominantly, successively lengthening, might be likened to the lengthening ripples from a stone dropped into a pool. The poem starts with Śiva's city, a precise point; but the *tāṇḍava* dance moves out from this central point by threatening to shake the whole world to pieces. With the description of the seasons, the poem seems to be moving further from any possible story-line; the slow succession of the seasons succeeds the rapidity of art, the dance. The previous exploits of the mountain traverse time; the *śleṣa* and *yamakas* employed in the description of its present condition, together with the confusion of tenses that the *yamakas* involve, leave the reader or listener in something of a daze. The sixth *sarga*, the sixth ripple, merges with the stillness of the pool, in as much as it leads to Parameśvara who is everywhere. However, the introduction of divine truth concludes with the statement of the particular fact—Andhaka's defeat of the other gods—that is the ostensible theme of the poem.

The second section of the *Haravijaya* is far more homogeneous than the first. The news that Spring brought about Andhaka at the end of the sixth *sarga* ignites a bomb, or firework as it were, and the succeeding *sargas* are the explosion and its reverberations. Śiva's assembly erupts in fury, grinding armlets and necklaces to powder in the extremity of its agitation. After *sarga* 7, which shows the ire of each *gaṇa*-lord, Kālamusala, evidently the most important of them, speaks first and in favour of immediate battle. Two *gaṇa*-lords in favour of diplomacy are required to counterbalance Kālamusala's speech, one in each of the two succeeding *sargas*. Thereafter war (*daṇḍa*) alternates with diplomacy (*naya*). Whereas the first section of the poem is complex in form, the second is starkly simple, as is perhaps borne out by its uniformly moderate *sarga* lengths. It starts and ends with great abruptness.

The distinction between the second and third sections is equally clear. After the stress of the council chamber the reader or listener is offered relief. Śiva's followers and their women go off merry-hearted to gather flowers, as they have every right to do now that Śiva has decided to temporize and send an envoy. This holiday mood sees the poet embarked on another developing sequence such as the first section. The leisurely movement of this section is, however, surer and more obvious than that of the

first, its culminating point explicit. However, within this movement there is a still point; two *sargas* together form what I see as the core of the poem. Śiva's followers and their women begin by picking flowers and end up, after a party, in bed. This wholly natural sequence is interrupted by the no less natural sequence of the sun's setting and the moon's rising (*sargas* 19 and 20). Thereafter we have the core: the merging of Śiva and Pārvatī to form one body, half male, half female (*sarga* 21); and a description of the ocean (*sarga* 22). What the ocean is doing here might not be obvious at first sight. But the ocean is a paramount symbol of the reduction of multiplicity to unity; so too is the combination of man and woman the emblem of oneness. These two *sargas* prefigure the more mundane unities to be obtained in the copulations of *sarga* 27; and themselves express in grosser form the philosophical unity of the sixth *sarga*.

The short fourth section (*sargas* 29, 30, and 31) is a bridge between what may be seen as two halves of the poem, for in *sarga* 30 the envoy's journey to the enemy-held city of the gods is described, and from then on there is a dramatic tension between the forces of Śiva and of Andhaka. The security of the isolated world of Mount Mandara is left behind, not to be regained until the final verses of the poem. The long aerial journey of the envoy (*dūta*) is prefigured by the short journeys of the female go-betweens (*dūtī*) (*sarga* 25) whose friends seem to have become separated from their lovers since playing in the water together in *sarga* 18.

The division between the fouth and fifth sections is the least obvious. In *sarga* 31 the envoy reaches Indra's city and views it from without. In *sarga* 32 he enters it, and makes his way to Andhaka's palace. It is now that he confronts the demons, now that the second half of the poem begins. In section three the opposition of male and female was resolved; in sections five and six the opposition between god and demon is made plain and then finally resolved by the demon's death.

The fifth section of the *Haravijaya* resembles the second section in that it mainly consists of speeches in an assembly-hall. There are, however, important differences. To begin with, the first *sarga*, *sarga* 32, echoes the complexities of the first section of the poem, for it is itself composed of several parts. The section which it begins is the most dramatic of all, and the *sarga* is the

most dramatic of all the *sargas* in the poem. Kālamusala, the envoy, views the wonders of Indra's city as he proceeds through it; he is shown into Andhaka's palace and Andhaka is described sitting on his throne; Kālamusala addresses a eulogy to the demon-king before delivering the nub of his message, which is that the demons should go back to where they came from, Pātāla, beneath the earth, and live in friendship with the gods. This is followed by a short *sarga* divided into two: a contemptuous response from the demons' chief adviser, Uśanas, draws forth the boldest defiance from the lone *gaṇa*-lord: after praising the might of Viṣṇu and his mount, Tārkṣya, Kālamusala declares that he alone will drive all the demons back to Pātāla! The next *sarga* describes the general fury of the demons in the assembly-hall, and resembles the beginning of the second section. And thereafter the remaining four *sargas* are each given over to a single speech. Andhaka attempts to calm his followers, but is himself thoroughly annoyed, and he abuses Śiva (*sarga* 35). The rhythm of the second section is briefly adopted, one demon arguing for diplomacy, another urging war. The envoy has the last word, and reaches the highest degree of animosity.

The sixth section concludes the poem. Here the heroic might spoken of so freely in the speeches of sections two and five, and the divine power configured in the myths referred to throughout the poem, take the stage. A vast panorama of gods and demons opens out. The tension and uncertainty lying at the back of all the earlier *sargas* now manifest themselves, pouring forth in a tremendous crescendo in which the hymn to Caṇḍī, *sarga* 47, is only an element, where indeed Śiva's final appearance and eventual slaying of the demon are only the crest of the wave of violence in which all the varied waters of the poem are gathered and fulfilled.

Wellek and Warren remark, 'There are few works of art which are not ridiculous or meaningless in synopsis (which can be justified only as a pedagogical device).'[4] For a genre like the *mahākāvya*, some readers might feel that the work sounds better in synopsis than it is in reality,[5] and it is unfortunately the case

[4] *Theory of Literature*, p. 140.

[5] The unsympathetic reader might consider Bāṇa's punning analogy of the prose poem narrative (*ākhyāyikā*) to 'a bed which is to wake up its occupant happily refreshed' (introductory verse 20 to the *Harṣacarita*, trans. Cowell and Thomas, p. 3: sukha-prabodhalalitā ... śayyeva ...) to be applicable to all long *kāvya*.

that the standard pattern (itself misunderstood) of the *mahākāvya*[6] has served to conceal a great variety of structures in individual works.

Remarks of great interest about the structure of *kāvya* in general take the form of comparisons with other art forms, particularly architecture and music. Louis H. Gray said of Subandhu's prose poem, *Vāsavadattā*:

> The entire romance may, in a sense, be likened to India's own architecture, where the whole structure is so overlaid with minute detail that the eye forgets the outlines of the building in amazement at the delicate traceries which cover it.[7]

Another authority is more emphatic:

> In medieval time Oriya poets wrote their ornamental *kāvyas* with the pattern of Orissan temples in mind. To them each *kāvya* was like a temple, architecturally solid, covered thickly with sculpture from start to finish.[8]

One may forget 'the outlines of the building' and yet 'every slightest measurement in the temple is determined by the most specific laws of proportion ... since the dimensions of the building were designed not only for security and appropriateness, but to put the structure in harmony with the mystical numerical basis of the universe and time itself.'[9] We must also note, 'That this seemingly rigid control of an architect's imaginative faculty did not lead to complete uniformity the temples themselves are eloquent illustrations. Like all Indian art, they demonstrate what is so often forgotten in modern times, that true originality and creation can flourish under discipline of mind and hand.'[10]

Among poets themselves, the only comparison of their art to architecture which I have discovered happens to be made by Bāṇa, who compares the plays of Bhāsa to temples:

> Bhāsa gained as much splendour by his plays with introductions spoken by the manager, full of various characters, and furnished with startling episodes, as he would have done by the erection of temples, created by architects, adorned with several stories, and decorated with banners.[11]

[6] Rudraṭa's presentation of this pattern has been discussed above, pp. 29 ff.

[7] *Vāsavadattā, a Sanskrit Romance* (New York, 1913), p. 27.

[8] Mayadhar Mansinha, *History of Oriya Literature* (New Delhi, 1962), p. 3.

[9] Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore, 1971), p. 167.

[10] Ibid., p. 168.

[11] *Harṣacarita*, *ucchvāsa* 1, verse 15, ed. Kane, p. 2 (trans. Cowell and Thomas, p. 3):

Even this example is, of course, not altogether relevant, for the point of the comparison is the glory that can be got by building tempies. Yet, plays (*dṛśyakāvya*) are more aptly likened to temples than are poems (*śrutakāvya*). Plays have close connections with temples, being often performed in them; where special theatres are built, they, like the temple, have their origins in the Vedic sacrifice.[12] In the present context, the principal feature of resemblance between plays and temples is that both are bound by a variety of structural rules. Bhoja sets out four sets of sixty-four concepts governing the construction of a drama, a total of 256.[13] Poems were unscathed by this form of scholasticism.[14]

In his frequent references to the technical terms of other art forms Ratnākara reveals awareness of the importance of form, and perhaps even a slight distress at the lack of guidelines—other than established models, such as Māgha—for his own medium.[15] The second verse of the *Haravijaya* refers to the main structural divisions of the drama:

May Hari's ‹form›/‹drama›—
‹the mouth gaping wide›/‹where there is an opening of the plot›,
‹the image of the face›/‹the progression of the plot›
manifest in the mirror of his claws,
‹full of›/‹the development of the plot› great rage,
engendering «the anxious reflection» in the foe's forces
that is «the pause in the plot»,
culminating in the slaying of the arrogant demon—
purify you.[16]

sūtradhārakṛtārambhair nāṭakair bahubhūmikaiḥ/
sapatākair yaśo lebhe bhāso devakulair iva//

[12] Cf. M. Christopher Byrski, *Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre* (New Delhi, 1974), pp. 83 ff.

[13] See Raghavan, *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāra Prakāśa*, pp. 590 ff.

[14] Bhāmaha attempted to apply the five *saṃdhis* ('junctures'—see below) to the *mahākāvya*; Daṇḍin, however, uses the same term only loosely, desiring *sargas* to be *susaṃdhi*—usually interpreted to mean that *sargas* should be appropriately connected one to the other. Warder discerns the five *saṃdhis* in the *Kirātārjunīya*, and so too a seventeenth-century commentator—see *Indian Kāvya Literature*, Vol. 3, p. 209.

[15] For instance, Kālamusala begins his address to Andhaka by observmg, 'Few know how to give a good speech in the way that artists can draw a true line':

kalyāṇīṃ giram utsraṣṭuṃ viralā eva jānate/
satyāṃ rekhāṃ vilikhituṃ citrakarmavido yathā//32.70//

[16] jṛmbhāvikāsitamukhaṃ nakhadarpaṇāntar
āviṣkṛtapratimukhaṃ gururoṣagarbham/
rūpaṃ punātu janitāricamūvimarśam
udvṛttadaityavadhanirvahaṇaṃ harer vaḥ//1.22//

The course of action in this verse is smooth: the lion who is Viṣṇu opens his mouth, revealing his teeth which are thus enabled to be mirrored in his upraised claws, horrifying the offending demon in a hideous pause, culminating in his murder. But these 'junctures' of the plot of a drama are clumsy and mechanical notions, irrelevant to the organic form of true art, which is unique in each instance. The triviality of the 'junctures' is demonstrated by the fact that they can be contained within a single verse, as here.[17]

Drama leads us to music. Louis H. Gray pointed out that a 'Sanskrit drama is to be compared with an opera rather than with a play, since the main stress is laid on beauty of diction and versification instead of action'.[18] Ingalls goes more than half way to comparing *mahākāvya* to the symphony, when he says of the beginning of Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*, 'there is a cumulative flow to these verses, in effect not unlike the opening of a symphony.'[19] To see the Sanskrit drama as opera and the *mahākāvya* as symphony well points the difference between the two forms, I think. I am not able to pursue this musical analogy myself, not least because I am leaving metre out of account in this study; but I venture to remark that in opera both structure and emotional effect are far more explicit than in the symphony.

From these comparisons, which are appealing if not persuasive, we may gather that a few readers, at least, have felt that there is a hidden and significant form within longer Sanskrit poems.[20]

One feature of this form is plain to see, but has not been properly appreciated. I refer to the description of a mountain. This Ānandavardhana considers an impediment to *rasa*, an irrelevance inserted as a result of a poet's obsession with such figures of speech as the *yamaka*.[21] Note how Ānandavardhana

[17] For another instance of all five *saṃdhis* within a single verse, see Bhoja's *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa*, ed. Śarma and Paṇśīkar, 2nd ed. (Bombay, 1934), p. 742.

[18] 'The Viddhaśālabhañjikā of Rājaśekhara,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. xxvii, 1906, p. 5.

[19] Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 34.

[20] Sylvain Lévi was of the opinion that the failure of *alaṃkāraśāstra* to deal with the manner of treating a subject had resulted in modern scholars thinking it 'useless to search out the order of ideas in a Sanskrit [literary] text. This unfortunate prejudice has too often caused serious misconceptions.'—'La Suite des idées dans les textes Sanscrits', *Cinquantenaire de l'École des Hautes-Études, Sciences Philologiques*, 1927, pp. 91–9, p. 91.

[21] *Dhvanyāloka*, *vṛtti* ad 3.18 and 19, ed. Pāthak p. 398: yathā vipralambhaśṛṅgāre nāyakasya kasya cid varṇayitum upakrāntasya kaver yamakādyalaṅkāranibandhanarasikatayā mahatā prabandhena parvatādivarṇane. (*upakrānte* in Pāthak's text)

disregards the poet's own wishes and considers only the effect on the audience, a disjunction the greater on account of the verbal parallel—the poet's *rasikatā* (obsession) prevents *rasa.*[22] But the mountain is no more irrelevant than are the poet's inclinations.

The *mahākāvya* form as established by Bhāravi and Māgha gives over an early *sarga* to the description of a mountain, using many metres and difficult word-play. Why should this be so? To put it down to obsession is no explanation. Good aesthetic reasons can be given for the presence of the mountain in *mahākāvya*. The other place where word-play is used extensively is in the battle with which such poems end. Word-play manifestly befits the portrayal of war: its brutal treatment of the normal sentence forces the reader to share the discomfort undergone by the protagonists. Does not word-play also suggest the physical inaccessibility of the mountain? We might say that the description of the battle is counterbalanced by the description of the mountain at the other end of the poem.

In the *Haravijaya*, Mount Mandara represents permanence; it is permanent, for it is never shaken by the winds of doomsday (5.8). All the seasons are in season there (5.94). It is adjoined by the soaring pinnacle of a very long philosophical hymn to Śiva in his most abstract aspect (*sarga* 6). There is thus an important difference between the beginning and the end of the poem: permanence succeeds to impermanence. Śiva wins, but we have come down from the mountain. The first section of the poem carefully builds up permanence, an effect the brief conclusion cannot recapture. The hymn to Śiva (*sarga* 6) is, so to speak, counterbalanced by the hymn to Caṇḍī (*sarga* 47), but the profound change from Parameśvara to the bloodthirsty goddess signals the whole movement of the poem.

An interesting detail is that *citrabandha* (picture-verses) are used only in the battle *sargas* (nearly all such in *sarga* 43). This is natural when we remember that the origin of this fashion was almost certainly the writing of verses on weapons. In *sarga* 43 there are verses in the shapes of a spear (43.152), a club (43.156), a sword (43.159 and 160), a trident (43.232), a quiver (43.276), and an arrow (43.300). The single massivity of the mountain is succeeded by this multiplicity of trivial shapes. But then, to be

[22] Ānandavardhana uses similar contrasts elsewhere; thus *vṛtti ad* 3.14, ed. Pāthak, p. 376: dṛśyante ca kavayo'laṅkāranibandhanaikarasā anapekṣitarasaḥ prabandheṣu.

wonderfully various (*citra*) is the hallmark of the phenomenal world. Kālamusala, giving a quick summary of the creation of the universe for the demons' benefit, speaks of the desire to make the 'varied creation' (*citrasargacikīrṣā*, 32.92); Śiva shows the equivalence of world and *mahākāvya* when, enjoying the calm repose of Mount Mandara, he thus greets the deputation of the gods:

> The wonderful world of Brahmā the Shaper
> is like a poem,
> ‹within the sphere of creation›/‹made up of *sargas*›,
> ‹manifest its varied modes of life›/
> ‹with extensive *citrabandhas* and alliterations›;
> while you defend it
> the pure fame of the ancient ‹seer›/‹poet›
> is entirely assured.[23]

Ānandavardhana sets his face against the variety of the world when he turns *citra* into a term of opprobrium ('flashy'); he seeks instead the artificial essences that are the *rasas*.

An instance of domination of form parallel to the mountain is the description of the ocean in *sarga* 22. Here we have a natural form quite the opposite of the mountain, with at first sight even less justification than the mountain for its presence. I have above already attempted to justify the ocean; it can be added that both ocean and mountain are quintessences, both are sources of precious stones, both are involved in the production of *rasa* (*amṛta*, nectar). Although the mountain is immobile while the ocean is liquid, nothing is ultimately solid in *kāvya*: in addition to being punningly Sītā (4.23), the mountain is in the same way a woman's face (5.17), its caves are women (5.71); then again it looks just like Śiva (5.13,66). In as much as the mountain is a compendium of good things, we may compare it to *kāvya*. The poet accords himself a privileged position above the phenomenal world which, like the moon stained with its spot,[24]

[23] druhiṇasya kāvyam iva sargagocaram
sphuṭacitravṛttikam avadbhir adbhutam/
viśadaṃ bhavadbhir abhitanyatetarāṃ
abhitaḥ purāṇakavinā kṛtaṃ yaśaḥ//6.8//
My translation glosses over the distinction between Brahmā (whose concern is the world as part of creation) and Prajāpati, Brahmā's intermediary. For Druhiṇa as 'Shaper' I am indebted to Alain Daniélou, *Hindu Polytheism* (London, 1964), p. 235.

[24] I discuss this common theme of *kāvya* below, pp. 238 ff.

is imperfect (unlike his art); those who live on the mountain are so high that they see the other side of the moon, free from stain (4.37). It is because the mountain is the solidity, the security for which *kāvya* seeks, that a profusion of metres is lavished upon it, the single form expressed in a multiplicity of forms. In *sarga* 5 Ratnākara uses thirty-five different metres.[25]

'Every Poem must necessarily be a perfect Unity',[26] stated William Blake. I have attempted to sketch the outline of the *Haravijaya*, to give a convenient caricature. But its individuality, even only of its structure, is not easily captured. Wellek and Warren were, of course, correct when they decried synopsis. Any summary, above all of poetry, is to falsely declare what is not mentioned redundant. The poem is itself

However, the *Haravijaya* is made up of *sargas*, the forms of which are much more easily discussed. The *sarga* is all too obviously a unity. The basic form of the *sarga* is a succession of verses each independently describing the subject of the *sarga*. A comment of Renou's on the lack of structure in the Vedic hymns is equally appropriate to classical poetry:

> There is no logical connection; images flow one after the other, thoughts are juxtaposed, repeated, and turned about without any progress being made, more often than not without any coherent order (sans esquisser le plus souvent d'architecture).[27]

A good example of this basic form, or formlessness, is the *sarga* describing the ocean. The ocean is a symbol of unity, but the *sarga* is by no means stagnant. There are rhythms and modulations. Each of the sixty-five verses presents the ocean as conjured up by the poet's inner eye rather than as an external phenomenon. At first sight each verse stands alone and the order of verses appears random. But a closer reading readily reveals marked rhythms both at the beginning and at the end of the *sarga*.

The first verse provides an introduction:

[25] See H. D. Velankar, 'Prosodial Practice of Sanskrit Poets', p. 62. As Velankar points out, in his description of a mountain Bhāravi uses 16 metres, and Māgha 22. The fact that Śivasvāmin uses more metres for the same purpose than even Ratnākara strongly suggests that he aimed at surpassing the *Haravijaya*—he uses 39 metres.

[26] *The Writings of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, 3 vols. (London, 1925), Vol. 3, p. 361.

[27] *La Poésie Religieuse de l'Inde Antique* (Paris, 1942), p. 19.

Then the ocean,
as if angrily
discovering that Pārvatī
who thus formed half of Śiva's body
was intensely jealous of Gaṅgā on his head,
became at that time agitated,
given strength by the radiance of the moon.[28]

Verses 2 to 7 deal alternately with the rising and falling of the ocean. The ocean leaps high from the sea-bed as if following the moon; then returning to its own place it is motionless (22.2). The ocean having rested motionless arose, opening its pearl-shell eyes, as if released by nectareous moonbeams from a swoon induced by Śeṣa's poison (22.3). The ocean threw aloft the half moon reflected in its waves, as if seeking to join it to the half moon in the sky (22.4). The ocean's army of waters, as if eager to attack, rushed downwards to the submarine fire (22.5). When they had been heated by the poison that was the submarine fire, the snake-waves rolled on the ocean, coiling round the sandalwood trees that were the moonbeams (22.6). The ocean passionately rises to the sky; then, as if grieved at not managing to embrace Gaṅgā on Śiva's head, collapses (22.7). The emotions attributed to the ocean likewise oscillate: anger (22.1); friendliness (22.2); alertness (22.3); playfulness (22.4); desire to attack (22.5) and venom (22.6); frustrated passion (22.7). Hereafter the obvious up and down movement fades, the characteristic action of the ocean having been thus conveyed.

The ending is longer and more subtle than the beginning. As usual in a *mahākāvya* the end of the *sarga* is heralded by a change of metre, but with the significant difference in this case that the closing verses alternate between long and short verses: verses 1–56 Vasantatilaka (fourteen syllables to the quarter-verse), 57 Śragdharā (twenty-one syllables), 58 Śikhariṇī, (seventeen syllables), 59 Śragdharā, 60 Mālinī (fifteen syllables), 61 Śragdharā, 62 Mandākrāntā (seventeen syllables), 63 and 64 Śragdharā, 65 Aśvalalita (twenty-three syllables).

[28] ity ardhadeharacitasthitim uttamāṅga-
gaṅgābhyasūyanaparāṃ giriśasya gaurīm/
nātho'dhigamya saritām atha candradhāma-
saṃmūrchitaḥ krudha iva kṣubhitas tadāsīt//22.1//
Pārvatī's jealousy of Gaṅgā on Śiva's head is a common theme in poetry.

In the closing stages a distinctive mood comes to the surface. The ocean turns away the affectionate rivers, for ‹cold water›/‹a cold person› disregards a friendly person (22.54). A whirlpool looks like a plate on a potter's wheel (22.56)—the horrible is domesticated. The ocean is stupid because it attacks the shore, a friendly neighbouring kingdom (22.61). The billowing waves took lime from the shells swallowed by the submarine fire, gathered betel leaves from the shore and broke up pieces of areca-nut, so that the ocean was just like *pān*[29] (22.62). It is only fitting that the ocean should be depressed, since it can't keep its offspring, the moon, clean (22.63). The moonbeams resemble the monkeys in the *Rāmāyaṇa* who construct a causeway across the ocean (22.65)—the ocean is crossed, its resistance overcome, and we are finished with it! In between these verses are verses which praise the ocean or are neutral to it, as for example, 22.64—the column of waves the ocean throws aloft is as it were Kāma's banner; 22.59—the ocean's dark waters are brindled by the golden rays from the mountains in its depths; as the waters fall they look like Śiva's tigerskin falling from his waist in his evening dance. But the negative tone predominates. The poet might almost be said to be voicing displeasure consequent to boredom with the ocean.

The rest of the *sarga* contains only one verse which can be interpreted as unfavourable to the ocean; and it is humorous rather than sneering. The verse I refer to is the second of a pair viewing the ocean anthropomorphically. In the first verse the ocean is conceived of as larking about: as if wanting to make the river-women laugh, it rose up behind them and covered their large oyster-shell eyes with its billow-hands (22.42). The humour, if it be humour, lies in the fact that the ocean is immediately afterwards supposed to have indigestion:

> As if to revive the fire in its stomach,
> weakened by drinking too much water,
> the ocean gathered quantities of *tālīsa* powder
> from the woods on the shore
> with its big wave-hands.[30]

[29] Pān is betel as consumed: a betel leaf wrapped round a piece of areca-nut, with lime, and usually other ingredients.

[30] mandīkṛtasya śikhino jaṭharāspadasya
toyātipānavaśataḥ pṛthuvīcihastaiḥ/
uttejanārtham iva tīravanāntarāla-
tālīsacūrṇanikaraṃ vicakarṣa sindhuḥ//22.43//

The two verses most closely linked in this *sarga* happen to be the most realistic ones, assuming the reality of mermen and heavenly nymphs.

> The mermen were filled with lust
> when they saw the heavenly nymphs
> in their celestial vehicles
> thrown about in the sky by the waves;
> as if in overwhelming despair
> at not being able to possess them,
> they quickly jumped into the submarine fire.
>
> Ships were hurled so high
> by the towering waves and billows of the ocean
> that they voyaged alongside the throngs of celestial vehicles;
> the seafarers,
> gazing with longing at the heavenly nymphs,
> thought that heaven had fallen.[31]

The real duality of earth and heaven here replaces the usual duality provided by metaphor or pun.

Longer sequences are to be found, but they are fainter. Thus verses 20 to 23 present, directly or indirectly, prosperity. The ocean is a palace with women at its windows (22.20); the snakes on the beaches shed their skins as a congratulatory gift to the prosperous ocean (22.21); haughty mermen regard their own reflections in their scimitar-blades that are the curving waves (22.22); the ocean's whirlpools are deep caves where it hoards coffers brimming with jewels (22.23).

There are then degrees of order within this *sarga*. The dominant effect, nevertheless, is of disorder. The reader or listener is bombarded with novelty; and a whole gamut of emotions is run through. Many of the *sargas* of the poem have a preponderant emotion, whether adoration of Śiva or fury directed against Andhaka—though never with that artificial purity demanded

[31] vaimānikāmaravadhūr gagane taraṅgaiḥ
kṣiptāḥ sarāgam avalokya payomanuṣyāḥ/
adhyaurvavahni tadalābhavijṛmbhamāṇa-
śokkā ivāśu jaladhau dadati sma jhampām//22.17//

kṣiptās tathordhvam udadhes taralais taraṅga-
bhaṅgaiḥ plavāḥ saha vimānagaṇair viceruḥ/
ālokya saspṛham amīṣu yathā surastrīḥ
sāṃyātrikāś cyutim amaṃsata nākadhāmnaḥ//22.18//

by Ānandavardhana. The overall effect, in terms of *rasa* and *bhāva*, of the *sarga*'s wide range is to make it relatively neutral. The centre of the poem has been reached in the merging of Śiva and Pārvatī, and there is a natural lull before momentum is picked up in the movement towards copulation, a movement that begins in *sarga* 23, where the women adorn themselves. There are several psychological extremes in the description of the ocean. The ocean, stilled, is compared to a person unconscious after a snakebite (22.3); later, it roars like the Man-lion, ripping the rampart-chests of the mountain-demons on the shore (22.27). The ocean, would-be lover of Gaṅgā on Śiva's head, falls to the ground in his grief (22.7); later, looking on the moon, the ocean sheds pearl-tears of pure contentment (22.50). These extremes cancel each other out. Everything is contained within the ocean.

Such narrative sections as there are in the poem gain enormously in emphasis through their very rarity. Particularly important is the longest section, *sarga* 6.188–94, recounting the birth of Andhaka, and his subsequent conquest of the world. It is obvious that Siva should be praised before his aid is sought, nevertheless it is effective art that the most concentrated narration in the poem is immediately juxtaposed to the immense description of the one who is beyond being and non-being.

Among those *sargas* which are purely descriptive—the great majority—there is variation in the number of topics dealt with in each. There is the archetypal *mahākāvya sarga*, where every verse from first to last deals with the same topic, as in the *sarga* describing the ocean (and *sargas* 5, 17, 18, 19, etc.). Other *sargas* deal with two topics, with half the *sarga* per topic, as in *sarga* 1, describing first Siva's city, and then Śiva himself; and *sarga* 4, describing Mount Mandara in the role of churning rod, and then as the bow for the arrow that was fired at Tripura. The description of the six seasons in *sarga* 3 forms six parts, plus a general introduction and conclusion. *Sargas* 7 and 34 give a verse or two to each individual in the council-chambers.

There is a form intermediary between the *sarga* and the verse which Ratnākara uses freely. In this form verses are grouped together to form a syntactic unit. Such combination takes place in two ways. Two or more verses, up to thirteen in number, share a single verb; or, a series of verses, up to forty-one in

number (the whole of *sarga* 4), has the relative pronoun as the subject of the verb in each verse until the final verse, where the demonstrative pronoun and a name reveals the full identity of the subject. In both cases there is suspension of comprehension until the end of the series; we see here the dynamic of the verse invading that of the *sarga*. These two combinations occur in most *sargas*; the first type sometimes is found within the second. It is not inconceivable that the influence of Bāṇa is at the back of Ratnākara's extreme development of what is found only sparingly in earlier poets (the second type is not found at all in Bhāravi). It was easy for Bāṇa as a prose-poet to forever heap phrase on phrase to culminate in one final verb, but Ratnākara managed to follow his lead.

The fact remains, nevertheless, that formlessness is the most striking feature of Ratnākara's *sargas*. To a large extent this is true of *mahākāvya* in general. A modern exponent of the Alaṃkāra School has even been led to assert that Sanskrit poetry does not exist beyond the level of the individual verse![32] Such a view is absurd. Vāmana expresses the universal view when he says that like a single atom of fire, the single verse never shines.[33] It is interesting to note that Arabic poetry can present a somewhat similar formlessness, which has been termed 'molecular structure'.[34] There is, however, an analogy more obvious and more natural than these scientific terms, atom and molecule; I refer to the jewel. Anthologies of poetry were called 'jewel-caskets' (*Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*) and 'necklaces' (*Sūktimuktāvalī*). The *sargas* of a *mahākāvya*, as collections of jewel-verses, resemble necklaces rather than jewel-caskets because of their linear order. The poet wants each verse to be separate, for each verse is a cut and polished stone, designed to shine distinctly. The effect of

[32] See E. Gerow, *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech* (The Hague, 1971), p. 71.

[33] *Kāvyālaṃkārasūtra* 1.3–29: nānibaddhaṃ cakāsty ekatejaḥparamāṇuvat. Furthermore, Daṇḍin sees all forms of poetry (*śrutakāvya*) as deriving from the *mahākāvya* (*Kāvyadarśa* 1.13).

[34] 'One of the dominant traits of Arabic poetry (and not only poetry) is its "molecular structure", which means that artistic creation and critical evaluation are both directed toward the single line, not towards the poem as a whole. The term was coined by the Polish orientalist Tadeusz Kowalski in a study on early Arabic poetry ['Proba charaterystyki twórczości arabskiej', *Rocznik Orjentalistyczny*, Vol. IX, 1933, pp. 1–21].' Wolfhart Heinrichs, 'Literary Theory: The Problem of Its Efficiency', in G. E. von Grünebaum ed., *Arabic Poetry: Theory and Development* (Wiesbaden, 1973), p. 35.

each verse would be blurred if a clear gap were not felt to exist all round it. Aiming at distinctness of verse in his descriptions the poet is necessarily led to seek a random effect, since any patterning would interfere with linear purity, bunching some verses together and overshadowing others.

For the attentive reader or listener there is a special aesthetic value in the *sarga*. The following remarks of Rudolph Arnheim have some relevance here.

> What objection is there aesthetically to random patterns? Not that they are not interesting, suggestive, stimulating. They are—as anybody can testify who has looked at a pebbled beach, the New York City sky-line, or certain modern painting and sculpture. There is also great recreation in an occasional escape from sense. It cannot be said either that such patterns are unbalanced. Even the most outlandish conglomerations of elements can be made to balance perfectly about one central point. But stimulation, pleasure and balance are not enough. A work of art must do more than be itself: it must fulfil a semantic function, and no statement can be understood unless the relations between its elements form an organized whole.
>
> There is one means by which accidental agglomerations can acquire organization and meaning, namely quantity. The larger a random collection of elements is, the more the individual characteristics of the elements and their interrelationships will recede while their common properties will come to the fore.
>
> ... When examined piecemeal, the random collection seems to possess the wealth of universality since it contains an enormous variety, being, behaving and relating. But the riches turn out to be useless when we attempt to draw out the essence from the whole.[35]

Several points here are helpful to the understanding of the *sarga*. Arnheim states both virtues and faults. The *sarga* can be said to be free from the faults. The *sargas* themselves join together to 'form an organized whole'; the verses join tgether to form a whole—the ocean or whatever else is being described. The semantic function is by no means lacking. It is, of course, the virtues which are important here. The formlessness of the *sarga* provides the 'great recreation' of 'escape from sense': the great concentration of meaning in the verse and the force of intellect demanded to make it yield its message have the result that relaxation in the wider perspective of the *sarga* is very welcome. It

[35] *Towards a Psychology of Art* (London, 1967), p. 170.

can be said that the *sarga*, as a random collection, does possess 'the wealth of universality'—but why should we, with Arnheim, seek 'to draw out the essence'? The jewel-like verse is just itself; a necklace has no essence. The difference here is that Arnheim is talking about a random collection as a whole, whereas we are dealing with a series of random collections (*sargas*) which together make up a coherent whole.

I call the verse jewel-like, but the structure of the verse of the *Haravijaya*, as with other *mahākāvyas*, is not easily described. It is best to begin with some atypical verses, taken from the rare narrative portions of the poem. Firstly, two verses forming one sentence, spoken by Spring at the conclusion of his hymn of praise to Śiva:

> O lord! we have heard that once long ago
> when you were at your ease on the Himālaya mountain,
> Pārvatī in graceful jest,
> a smile on her lips,
> silently came up behind you
> and covered your eyes
> with her lotus hands
> and then released them; 6.188
>
> immediately there came out from you, the primaeval man,
> a male creature bereft of eyes,
> like the seed of massed darkness
> swelling up from the mouth
> of the black night of doomsday. 6.189
>
> sukham ekadā sthitavato himācale smitabhinnavaktrapari-
> hāsapeśalam/
> girikanyayā nibhṛtam etya pṛṣṭhataḥ karapaṅkajasthagitamukta-
> cakṣuṣaḥ//
>
> sahasā vilocanavinākṛtaṃ purā puruṣaṃ purāṇapuruṣāt tvad
> utthitam/
> kṣayakālakālarajanīmukhocchvasattimiraughabījam iva nātha
> śuśruma//

Secondly a verse from the end of the poem:

> Then, his abundant blood
> sizzling in the flames of the trident's fire,
> his entire body was at once burned to ashes;
> watched intently

by all the surrounding gods and demons,
its light entered the body of Śiva
whose crest is the crescent moon. 50.89

triśikhadahanajvālātāpakvathadbahalāsrjaḥ
sapadi vapuṣas tasyāśeṣāt kṛtād atha bhasmasāt/
stimitanayanavrātair dṛṣṭaṃ surāsuramaṇḍalaiḥ
śaśidharakalāmauler jyotiḥ śarīram athāviśat//

Thus the beginning and the end of Andhaka. All three verses follow the order of events in the order of their words. The verbs come at the end, as is the basic pattern of Sanskrit syntax. The straightforward simile in the second verse is scarcely a simile, since Andhaka was born as a result of Pārvatī's cutting off for a moment the light of the universe, Śiva's three eyes, and is indeed the seed of darkness. The syntax is clear and muscular, apart from the complex adverb *smitabhinnavaktraparihāsa-peśalam*, 'in graceful jest, a smile on her lips'. This adverb, itself gracefully sophisticated, is in striking contrast to the event starkly spelt out in the next verse. Such verses as these are mirroring (mythical) reality, and our imagination finds it easy to follow events.

Now a fairly typical verse, from the first *sarga*.

In the vehemence of his performance,
when his long leg is raised erect
and the curved digit of the moon
is touched by his ankle
it looks like a ruby anklet
broken by the sharp peak
of one of the mountains he's overturned. 1.45

Yasyānukārarabhasotthitadaṇḍapāda-
gulphāgrasaṃghaṭitamaṇḍalapūrvarekhaḥ/[36]
paryastaparvataśitāśriviśīryamāṇa-
māṇikyapādakaṭakaśriyam eti candraḥ//

Here the verse is made up of two large compounds, the relative pronoun *yasya* which links the verse to the rest of the sequence (which culminates in a verse saying 'That Śiva...') and the two words, 'The moon goes', *eti candraḥ*. The verb of the sentence applies to the journey that the moon takes in the poet's mind: it

[36] *maṇḍalapūrvarekhaḥ* Comm.: maṇḍalapūrvalekhā parivartulapradhānā maṇḍalasya vā bimbasya pūrvā prathamā lekhā kalā yasya tādṛśaḥ śaśī.

goes to the beauty (*śriyam*) of a ruby anklet. I have translated *-śriyam eti* as 'looks like' because as Ingalls mentions, *śrī*, like *lakṣmī*, has a weakened sense meaning 'little more than "appearance" '.[37] Ingalls explains, 'The poets in their constant search for new ways to express similes and other comparable figures of speech have reduced vast numbers of words to this weakened sense.'[38] However, it must be asked, for whom are these words weakened? These two words are at the same time the names of a most popular goddess; they are not easily weakened. In part, at least, the difficulty may be that our ideas of beauty are less sophisticated than was the case with the Sanskrit poets. A good example of where *lakṣmī* ought, in our terms, to be weakened but isn't comes from the same *sarga*:

In this city at night
the moonbeams are beautiful
for, speckled with the incense-smoke
of pleasing aloes-wood,
they seem streaked with scars
from being caught in the pincer-movement
when the leaves of the windows' golden shutters
are closed. 1.15

yasyāṃ niśāsu rucirāgurudhūpadhūma-
kalmāṣitaṃ śaśabhṛtaḥ karacakravālam/
śliṣyadgavākṣakaladhautakavāṭapaṭṭa-
saṃdaṃśalagnakiṇalekham ivaiti lakṣmīm//

Flawed beauty has its own special attractiveness, and I suppose the smoke is an equivalent to beauty-spots; again, scars are handsome on a man, and the moonbeams here are masculine. These arguments, however, cannot outweigh the strong element of sadism in the verse—the suppositious pain is an important part of the poet's impression of beauty. All this might seem far removed from structure, but it is highly relevant. The poet wants every verse to be beautiful, and he often points out the specific beauty to us. In 1.45 and in the third and fourth *padas* of 1.15 the action of the verse is freed from declension and conjugation within the compounds, while the simple verb gives force to the perhaps arbitrarily applied notion of beauty.[39]

[37] 'Words for Beauty', p. 102. [38] Ibid.

[39] Further examples from the first *sarga*: bibharti ... -lakṣmīṃ (1.19), lakṣmīṃ atāniṣur (1.25), śriyam ety (1.43), -śriyaṃ vahati (1.48), -śriyaṃ dadhati (1.03).

The simplicity of the verb—usually a common word meaning to go or to bear—counterbalances the participles' variety of meanings within the compounds. Thus in 1.45 the verb is *eti*, 'goes', and the participles are *-utthita-*, 'raised'; *-saṃghaṭita-* 'touched'; *paryasta-* 'overturned'; and *-viśīryamāṇa-*, 'being broken'. The contrast between verb and participle is lost in English translation, where the participle is often best rendered by a verb.

Another aspect of every verse being designed to be beautiful is what may be called intensification. Intensification takes place in a variety of ways. The verb is intensified by the addition to the third person of the adverbial suffixes *tarām* (comparative) and *tamām* (superlative). The former occurs some thirty times in the *Haravijaya*, the latter only once, in the magnificent phrase *atamitamām abhitas tamītamobhiḥ* (28.26), '(when the sun rose) the darkness of night entirely faded away on all sides.' The verb is also a few times strengthened by Ratnākara's adding an extra, intensifying, prefix to the verb: thus, *abhi* is added—*abhipragalbhire* (3.13) 'they were greatly emboldened', *abhyudveme* (18.50) 'it was spewed right out'; and *ati—atipāti* (5.137) 'zealously protects'.

Perhaps the commonest form of intensification is the free use of words meaning 'mass or multitude'. Thus *karacakravāla* (1.15) 'a multitude of rays'—such words are used so freely that it is often best to leave them untranslated, as do Cowell and Thomas in their translation of Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*, Bāṇa being as profuse as Ratnākara in this respect. In narrative verses these words are more significant, as in 50.89 with *-nayanavrāta* and *surāsuramaṇḍala*—large numbers of gods and demons were all eyes. We are here bordering on the general question of redundancy. It may be that accepted English today is less tolerant of redundancy than was *kāvya*. Even in the narrative verse 50.89 I left one word untranslated: *ātapa* 'heat' in the compound *triśikhadahanajvālātāpa kvathadbahalasṛjaḥ*, 'his abundant blood sizzling in the flames of the trident's fire'. This at least apparent redundancy is partly due to the long metres which Ratnākara uses. It has also the same origin as the use of long metres, the desire for solemnity, for weight.

Volume is also added by frequently forming abstract nouns with the suffixes *tā* and *tva*, as for example *-bhasmanā* ...

indubimbasaṃvāditām upagatena (2.12) 'the dust reached the state of resembling the moon.'[40] This kind of phrase, however, sounds more unwieldly in English than it does in Sanskrit, where it is used most extensively in philosophical discourse. Abstract nouns are well suited to the process of ratiocination taking place in this verse:

For those who live on the lofty peaks of this mountain
and see the other side of the moon
bereft of the stain of the mark
the fact that there is a deer
adhering to its lap
belongs only to tradition. 4.39

pāścātyabhāgam avalokayatāṃ śaśāṅka-
bimbasya lakṣmamalaśūnyatayā parītam/
utsaṅgasaṅgimṛgatāgamikatvam eti
tuṅgeṣu yasya śikhareṣu kṛtāspadānām//

The *-tā* of *utsaṅgasaṅgimṛgatā* is a very convenient way of saying 'the fact that there is'; and *āgamikatvam eti*, 'belongs only to tradition', equally so. Both are precise. But *lakṣmamalaśūnyatayā parītam* is a roundabout way of saying *lakṣmamalaśūnyam*: the former ('provided with emptiness of the stain of the mark') is best translated like the latter as 'bereft of ...'.

Usually each descriptive verse, however long, has a single point, or conceit. The intellectual effort required to understand the verse is not so much lightened as made to seem lighter by the occasional presence of a long-winded phrase like *lakṣmamala-śūnyatayā parītam* (not to mention the valuable sound-effects often gained from redundancy). The unity of the verse is often broken up by including another sentence, either a gnomic utterance by way of conclusion, or a thought attributed to a non-human object such as a plant or the ocean. These sentences are plain and simple, in contrast to the rest of the verse.

These brief remarks must suffice for the verse. Both verse and *sarga* of the *Haravijaya* have much in common with those of other *mahākāvya*. From the point of view of the present study their importance is entirely subsidiary to that of the work as a whole.

To end where the chapter began, we may refer again to Agnidaṃṣṭra's remarks and apply them in more detail to the

[40] In other words, 'the dust resembled the moon'.

matter in hand. The verse, single but complex, is the jewel; the *sarga*, 'huge, and lustreless' (formless, lacking facets) is the boulder; the poem itself is the mountain, which Agnidaṃṣṭra mentions only as a repository of boulders. The form of a mountain is difficult to behold in its fulness, for it varies always, according to the perspective taken. It is not for nothing that the best-known definition of beauty in Sanskrit is apropos a mountain:

> He'd seen it often
> but that mountain
> filled Kṛṣṇa with wonder
> as though he'd never seen it:
> unceasing freshness
> is the true characteristic of the beautiful.[41]

[41] *Śiśupālavadha* 4.17:
dṛṣto'pi śailaḥ sa muhur murārer apūrvavad vismayam ātatāna/
kṣaṇe kṣaṇe yan navatām upaiti tad eva rūpaṃ ramaṇīyatāyāḥ//

CHAPTER 6

The *Gaṇas* and their Speeches

> Śiva's counsellors now debate, and the poet has up to Canto xvi to display his perfection in the art of politics. After all the talk an envoy is despatched to the demon to bid him retire from the realms he has usurped.... The envoy at last reaches the demon's kingdom in heaven...The exchange of speeches which follows requires seven cantos. The envoy naturally returns without having accomplished anything save a prodigious amount of bad rhetoric.

Thus A. B. Keith summarises one third of the *Haravijaya*—*sargas* 7–16 and *sargas* 31–8. I shall begin my discussion of these two sections of the poem by giving a much fuller summary.

In the final verse of the sixth *sarga*, at the conclusion of the gods' plea for Śiva's assistance against the depredations of the demon Andhaka, Śiva's attendants, the *gaṇas*, break their finger-rings in their furious response. These vehement counsellors are to hold the stage for the next ten *sargas*.

Sarga 7 describes the convulsions of the *gaṇas'* wrath. After Anger is said allegorically to enter the assembly-hall, each of the *gaṇas* is described by a verse in turn. Gaṇeśa's chest, covered in pearls from his necklace broken in his agitation, seemed studded with drops of sweat falling from the foes' Fortune now seeking shelter in his lap (7.3). Next comes Kālamusala, whose dark frown resembles the night of doomsday for the foe (7.4). Śikha's arm, white with the rays of his laugh,[1] seems to be turning into ashes through the heat of his heroism (7.9). The *gaṇas* do not just shout loudly and tear off their garlands—their disturbance is so violent that they shake the world:

> Anala's panting,
> his head bent,
> through the rent his hands had made in the earth,

[1] It is a convention of *kāvya* that teeth when shown, particularly in laughter, shed a white light.

shook that white lotus in its pool—
Śeṣa's coils in the depths of hell.[2]

Durdarśamūrti waters the tree his arm with the floods of water that are the rays from his finger-nails (7.15)—what he is really doing is massaging his arm (after the fashion of wrestlers). Smoke rises from Agnika's hands as he rubs them together (7.17), as it does from Diṇḍi's, who nearly burns everyone else with his fiery glances (7.26). The drops of sweat on Agnidhāman's chest are like the stars seen against Mount Meru (7.27). The sideways glance of Tāra is so fiery that it melts his golden armlet (7.33).

After the *gaṇas*, five *mātṛkās* (mother goddesses) are described, equally angry. Brāhmī, for instance, reddened the world as does the dawn with the powder from the crushed rubies of her rings as she rubbed her hands together (7.59). The *sarga* ends thus:

Speckling so the world
by spreading over the zodiac
all the star-pearls
flying from the shattering of necklaces,
the assembly of Śiva the Motionless
was then like the ocean's tide,
unsettled in its agitation,
roaring *gaṇa*-lords its many breakers.[3]

This general description of the assembly is followed by nine *sargas*, each of which comprises the speech of one *gaṇa*-lord. In each *sarga* several verses first describe the speaker, and in most cases the concluding verses describe the reaction of the audience.

First to speak is the *gaṇa*-lord called Kālamusala. For dramatic effect Ratnākara stills momentarily the rising tide of fury of the previous *sarga*, beginning,

[2] śvāsānilā natamukhasya karābhighāta-
bhinnāvaniprakaṭarandhrapathapraviṣṭāḥ/
pātālagarbhanalinīm analasya cakrur
uddhūtaśeṣaphaṇapāṇḍurapuṇḍarīkām//7.11//

Properly speaking Pātāla, the subterranean world where serpents dwell with Śeṣa as their king, is not a hell.

[3] ittham hāroddalanavigalattāramuktāphalaugha-
jyotiścakrākramaṇaśabalān kurvatī digvibhāgān/
sā veleva kṣubhitaviṣamā ratnarāśes tadānīm
sthāṇor garjadgaṇapatiśatollolajālā sabhāsīt//7.64//

While the necklaces of moonstone,
as if to allay the fire of the *gaṇa*-lords' wrath,
pour forth moisture
under the rays of the glistering moon-digit
on the crest of Śiva the Beneficent;[4]

and continuing to 'cool it', with the warriors' sword-blades, sprinkled with moonlight rays from their pearl-necklaces, seeming to have drunk the foes' white fame (8.2). This sense of relaxation is taken further by the comparison of Kālamusala's war-yoyo[5] to a piece of elephant fodder (8.3), and by the hint of yogic inactivity when he is said to be wearing a snake big enough to serve as a squatting-band[6] (8.4).

Kālamusala commences his speech by referring in nineteen verses to the glory and might of Śiva, a topic neglected and almost forgotten in the ensuing harangues. Firstly, Śiva is discussed in philosophical terms:

Words and concepts don't refer to reality—
they produce each other.
They are unstable.
Śiva far surpasses them.
He is constant,
his form is unmixed.[7]

And then a sudden transition to one of the god's most startling images:

Again and again on doomsday night
he wears the elephant skin
dripping blood,

[4] itthaṃ gaṇādhipatikopakṛśānuśānti-
hetor ivendumaṇihāralatāguṇeṣu/
muñcatsu śaṃkarakirīṭakarālacandra-
khaṇḍāṃśupātavaśataḥ śucivārivarṣam//8.1//

[5] Since his *kanduka* resembles the discs of the sun and moon, it is likely a yo-yo is meant. See below, p. 205, fn 96; here too it may be a plaything.

[6] A *paryaṅkabandha*, or *yogapaṭṭa* is a cloth band worn by yogins in squatting positions such as *utkūṭikāsanā*. Passed behind the back and encompassing the knees, it helps keep the position firm.

[7] yeṣām avastuviṣayaḥ prathitaḥ kilātma-
lābhaḥ parasparakṛtaḥ plavamānavṛttih/
dūraṃ vyatītya nikhilān khalu tān vikalpāñ
śabdāṃś ca yaḥ sthitim asaṃskaramūrtir āpat//8.6//

thrown upwards
in the unrestrained tumult of the *tāṇḍava* dance—
it's another sky wearing evening red.[8]

Although the gamut of Śiva's forms and attributes as found in *kāvya* is referred to throughout the poem, the *tāṇḍava* dance is referred to selectively, and its importance is shown by the careful and restrained use made of it in the poem.

The sequence of verses carries on with two verses about Śiva's severing of Brahmā's fifth head;[9] two verses about the destruction of Tripura; two verses about Śiva in the semblance of a forester; one verse referring to the destruction of Kāma; and ends with the claim—not entirely appropriate in the light of what has happened—that while Śiva is lord of the three worlds, no foe can cause distress. Then two verses on Śiva's trident, very appropriately, for, as we know from the Purāṇas and from sculpture at Elephanta and Ellora, it is on this trident that Andhaka is to be impaled. This is the first of the two verses:

Whoever could withstand this trident in battle?
The flames from its prongs boils up the waters of the ocean.
It's as dreadful as the contortions of his frown
when in his doomsday rage he swallows up the universe.[10]

With another verse on Śiva's cutting off Brahmā's fifth head, one on the killing of Gaja, and three on Śiva's role at doomsday, this section of Kālamusala's speech ends as it began with the philosophical dimension of Śiva:

Or rather never mind
this one who is empty of the transformations of being—
those transformations which are the origin
of the fire of sorrow
that has taken over the seven worlds;
never mind him

[8] yenāsakṛtpralayakālaniśāvatāra-
prārabdhatāṇḍavanirargalaḍambareṇa/
utkṣiptam ambaram ivāparam ūḍhasāṃdhya-
rāgaṃ vinirgaladasṛgdvipacarma babhre//8.7//

[9] See below, p. 235.

[10] asyāhave ka iva śūlam idaṃ saheta
śākhānalakvathanaduḥsthitasāgarāmbhaḥ/
bibhraj jagatkavalanotthitakālarātri-
kopotkaṭabhrukuṭibhaṅgabhayaṁkaratvam//8.17//

who is the sole cause of the states of origination,
maintenance and destruction of the universe—
that universe grounded
on intellect, the great principle,
and all the other distinctions.[11]

'Or rather never mind'—typical of the *gaṇa*-lords is this indifference to philosophy. And the reference to Śiva in Kālamusala's speech is tidily enclosed within these philosophical limits. Kālamusala claims that he can do it all himself:

Without even completing three steps
I shall now snatch the Fortune of the demon lord
as Viṣṇu did Bali's...[12]

Kālamusala says he can lift up the earth like a parasol (8.27) and knock down Mount Meru with his arm that resembles the boar *avatāra* of Viṣṇu (8.28). At length, with surprising modesty he declares, 'But what of me! Let all your majesty's warriors attack' (8.45).

This is followed in *sarga* 9 by a pacific speech from Prabhāmaya, whose heart is the seat of unfathomable magnanimity (9.4). Sarasvatī, goddess of speech, dwells in his mouth (9.5). He too is a warrior, but perhaps especially appropriate to his character, as it faintly emerges, is the conceit that the dust from his armies, spreading over the quarters, filled in the hollow places of the earth as if to smooth his progress (9.6).

Prabhāmaya begins by reproving Kālamusala:

Your character is too highly heroic.
Away with this excitement over a little matter.
Is a mountain shaken
by the fluttering of a sparrow's wing?[13]

He refers briefly to Śiva. While Śiva is here, what can distress you? (9.14)

[11] dūre'thavaiṣa viṣayīkṛtasaptaloka-
duḥkhānalaprabhavabhāvavikāraśūnyaḥ/
āstām aśeṣamahadādiviśeṣaniṣṭha-
viśvodayasthitivināśadaśaikahetuḥ//8.24//

[12] lakṣmīm apūritapadatraya eva daitya-
nāthasya saṃprati baler iva śārṅgapāṇiḥ/
... aham ākṣipāmi

[13] alaṃ tavābhyunnatadhairyavṛtteḥ saṃrambhitām etya kṛśe'pi kārye/
saṃbhāvyate kiṃ kalaviṅkapakṣaravābhighātena kulādrikampaḥ//9.12//

Closing its lotus eyes
this fifth face
of the Moon-crested lord Śiva
who is to be meditated upon
thinks,
I am sure,
of nothing but the good of the world.[14]

Śiva is in charge, but is otherwise remote from the scene. There follow eleven verses describing the joint form of Śiva and Viṣṇu, Harihara, ending,

Thus this one,
half his body merged with Viṣṇu,
manifests complete and supreme lordship
unequalled in the three worlds.[15]

We then have ten verses on the fire of doomsday. But Śiva is not actively involved—the sequence concludes with the fire attending upon Śiva (who, as an ascetic, smears himself with ashes) by sprinkling its ash upon him. Śiva, in Prabhāmaya's diplomatic terms, is here not the cause but the beneficiary of doomsday. The next thirteen verses refer to the churning of the ocean. Viṣṇu plays an important part, for it is three times mentioned that he holds Mandara, the churning rod. In the final verse of the sequence it is mentioned that Śiva swallows the poison produced by the churning. The two gods thus co-operate, with Viṣṇu playing the larger part; the case is reversed in the next sequence. Śiva sets out to destroy Tripura, the demon city, and Viṣṇu becomes the arrow of his bow (9.52–61). Only the last few verses describe the power of Śiva alone: the burning power of his third eye and its burning up of Kāma and Time (9.62–9). Śiva's dark throat seems filled with the darkness of hell, as if he had just now swallowed all the seven worlds (9.70); conversely, his toes are bright, as if showing the illumination of wisdom to the gods, in the guise of the lustrous rays from the gleaming nails (9.71). His last reference to Śiva is similar in tone to his first (9.15):

[14] manye nimīlannayanāravindam etad vibhoḥ pañcamam asya vaktram/
jagaddhitād eva na kiṃcid anyad dhyeyātmanaś cintayatīndumauleḥ//9.15//

[15] ity eṣa miśrikṛtakaiṭabhāriśarīrabhāgo vibhutāviśeṣam/
vyanakti lokatritaye'py aśeṣam ananyasādhāraṇatāṃ upetam//9.27//

There's no end to the confusion doubt brings
even to our sharp wits
when deep matters are in hand;
assuredly, his understanding is crystal-clear
but it moves far above our thoughts,
concerned with all manner of things.[16]

In other words, it is up to them to work out what to do.[17] When the nub of a matter is looked at wisely, everything develops smoothly, just as sandalwood when rubbed unfolds its scent (9.73). The *gaṇas* are to calm down and follow the five-fold course of policy—'There is nothing in the world that cannot be accomplished by the circumspect'[18] (9.74 and 75). The *gaṇa*-lords, who had applauded Kālamusala, look at each other in silence at the end of Prabhāmaya's speech (9.76).

Vahnigarbha, the next speaker, begins by praising Prabhāmaya's speech, which he says is faultless (10.13). The burden of Vahnigarbha's speech is that one must see one's way clearly, and not get lost in the darkness of anger. Success is to be obtained by due regard to the text-books of policy (10.20). Having earlier mentioned the darkness of anger, he now says that the vision of the demons is impaired by the darkness of their subterranean home, and that is why they cannot look upon Viṣṇu's flaming discus (10.21). There follow thirteen verses in praise of Viṣṇu, several of which refer to his cunning. The remainder of his speech is explicitly addressed to the advocate of immediate war, Kālamusala (10.35–51). He concedes that a fiery person like Kālamusala cannot calm down without killing off his foes (10.45), but there is no lasting success in violence if due use is not made of diplomacy (10.50). At this speech the assemblage of kings, as they are now called, rejoices (10.52).

Prabhāmaya and Vahnigarbha have both argued against Kālamusala; hereafter the speakers alternate between advocacy

[16] saṃdehamohaviratir gahaneṣu kṛtyavastuṣv apoḍhatamasām api no matīnām/
asyāmalāḥ kila dhiyo vicaranti yena tāsām upary upari citraviśeṣaniṣṭhāḥ//9.72//

[17] I think the commentator misunderstands this verse. If, as the commentator claims, Prabhāmaya is saying that only Śiva knows what to do—'bhagavān eva sāṃpratikaṃ kāryatattvaṃ niścetum alam'—there is no point in talking about policy. there is no point in making speeches.

[18] ... prekṣāvatāṃ jagati tan na yad asty asādhyam//9.75//

of war and advocacy of policy. The fourth to speak, Agnidaṃṣṭra, is very angry: he seethed like the ocean when he heard Vahnigarbha's speech (11.1); the twisting and turning of his body breaks the jewelled seat he sits on (11.9). He politely begins by praising Vahnigarbha's speech, which, he says, has adorned the path of policy (11.10). With regard to the speech he is about to make, his modesty is extreme:

> I may look horrible
> but my speech is different.
> You'll laugh when you hear it—
> it's inconsequential piffle,
> as lightweight
> as the fluff of the silk-cotton tree.[19]

Devoting three verses to Vahnigarbha's valour in battle, he then tries to defeat his arguments by sarcasm:

> Such are you;
> your speech advocating the path of policy was all too bold—
> it may have plumbed the depths
> of the whole science of politics
> but, it seems to me,
> now the gods have heard it
> they are even more eager for battle![20]

Agnidaṃṣṭra then embarks on a description of the gods, a verse for each. He describes the rage and fury of Viṣṇu, Balarāma, Krodheśvara and Aprakampa (these two are *gaṇas*), Kālī, Gaṇeśa, and lastly Kumāra:

> Look, O *gaṇa*-lord!
> Now Kumāra's heard that speech of yours
> in the assembly-hall of Moon-crested Śiva,
> elegantly setting out the mystery of policy,

[19] ākāradāruṇatayāpi mamānvitasya
vākyaṃ vilakṣaṇam abhiplutituccharūpam/
asthāsnu tūlam iva śālmalipādapasya
saṃśrūyamāṇam upayāsyati hāsyatāṃ vaḥ//11.13//

[20] tasyāpi nāma bhavataḥ sakalārthaśāstra-
tattvāvagāhanagabhīram atipragalbham/
ākarṇya vākyam amarā nayamārgaśāli
śaṅke bhavanti saviśeṣaraṇābhilāṣāḥ//11.17//

his face, normally so bright,
is darkened.[21]

Agnidaṃṣṭra praises his own valour, urges on the others, and again praises himself:

Do warriors really use these pathetic sword-blades in battle
when I'm about?
I'm so tough
I can smash mountain-chains of demons
with a blow from my diamond-hard fist![22]

The whole burden of battle with the demons
can be placed on this arm of mine—
it won't be too heavy for it,
any more than was the earth
for the tip of Bird-bannered Viṣṇu's tusk
when at doomsday he took on the form of a boar.[23]

He lists the notorious demons who have been defeated by the gods: Rāvaṇa, Rāhu, Bali, Hiraṇyakaśipu, and Hiraṇyākṣa. But since their defeat his audience has not had the pleasure of satisfying its itch for battle (11.49).

It is the proper duty of a warrior to fight (11.50–2). Apathy results in failure; it is the resolute man who succeeds (11.53–8). The resolute man is insuperable (11.59–70). The radiance of the sun is limited, but not the heart of an energetic man (11.61).

A jewel is best,
shattering the mass of darkness
with the rays it emits:
though small, its value is very great.

[21] vākyaṃ tavaitad iti śuśruvuṣaḥ salīlam
ākṣiptanīti gahanaṃ sadasīndumauleḥ/
paśyādhunātivimalāpi guhasya vaktra-
cchāyā gaṇādhipa malīmasatāṃ bibharti//11.27//

[22] tīvrātmano dalayataḥ karavajramuṣṭi-
ghātena dānavakulācalacakravālam/
vyāpāritā yudhi bhaṭaiḥ kṛpaṇāḥ kṛpāṇa-
paṭṭā bhavanti mama nūnam amī purastāt//11.42//

[23] āropito'pi sakalāsurasaṃprahāra-
bhāro bharāya na bhaviṣyati me'tra bāhau/
saṃhārakolavapuṣaḥ khagaketanasya
daṃṣṭrāgrabhāga iva ratnavatīniveśaḥ//11.43//

What can we do with the boulders on the mountains,
huge, and lustreless?[24]

What use is the lofty peak on which the sun sets, for it cannot prevent the sun from falling from the sky? (11.67 and 68). Roots are better than branches, for they, though unseen, keep the tree upright (11.70).

Agnidaṃṣṭra enumerates the contortions taking place in the assembly on account of its wrath, and remarks that such rage is barren (11.71 and 72).

There should be no frowning, no striking shoulders,
no biting of lips;
at doomsday
fire's irresistible flames
turn the worlds to ashes
without going through the gestures of anger.[25]

All this fuss about battle with the demons ill befits you who have no trouble in knocking down mountains and who are capable of overturning the universe (11.74).

I have spoken to the point.
There's no need to inflame your ardour
with a longer speech—
you're already overexcited.
How wise you are!
Don't you realize
the only aim of my speech here
is to enjoin tumultuous battle with the demon lord.[26]

Ratnākara makes no mention of the *gaṇas*' reaction to this speech; it is difficult to know how they would have reacted to such heavy sarcasm.

[24] niṣṭhyūtadīdhitiśikhādalitāndhakāra-
rāśir varaṃ maṇir asau tanur apy anarghaḥ/
kṣoṇībhṛtāṃ kaṭakavartmani kiṃ nu kṛtyam
aṃśuśriyā virahitair nanu gaṇḍaśailaiḥ//11.66//

[25] na bhrūvibhaṅgaracanā vadane na cāṃsa-
deśāhatir na daśanacchadadaṃśayogaḥ/
krodhānubhāvaghaṭanena vinā kṣaye'gnir
bhasmīkaroti bhuvanāni ca duḥsahārciḥ//11.73//

[26] saṃkṣepa eṣa gadito vacanaprapañca-
saṃcodanena kim ivorjitatejasāṃ vaḥ/
daityendraḍāmarasamīkaniyogam eva
vākyārtham atra mama kiṃ vibudhā manudhve//11.75//

Aṭṭahāsa begins by praising Agnidaṃṣṭra's speech and expressing modesty, before suddenly attacking him:

> How could your mind,
> clinging to darkness,
> get to the heart of the matter?
> O *gaṇa*-lord,
> the shining flame of a jewel-lamp
> is not sooty.[27]

What is necessary is to consider the situation in the light of policy. One must not do anything rash. In politics, as in medicine, a careful investigation is necessary (12.31). An enterprise which is not carefully thought out is not praised by the wise, any more than is a bad poem (12.32). Counsel is compared punningly to a paint-brush (12.30), the supreme spirit (12.35), a lotus stalk (12.36); the means that are to be used are compared punningly to arboriculture (12.37), and a ladder (12.40), and without a pun to the four elephants which support the earth (12.50).

One has to do things in due order: a lion may kill must elephants, but when it's in the water fish tear off its mane (12.46). A boar is a match for an elephant in early spring, but in the hot season can be subdued by dogs (12.47). Then a *cri de coeur* from the man of learning: if you don't make use of the proper means as laid down by the science of policy, then what, I wonder, is the use of that science? (12.51). You mustn't be carried away by your emotions (12.53). You must take account of policy (12.56). Men versed in policy are boats to bring rescue from the ocean of affairs (12.57).

Aṭṭahāsa then somewhat deflects the course of his argument by reminding his audience that they need Śiva's command before they can subdue the foe (12.59). Śiva is fate (12.61–3). His acts seem contradictory to those who have not freed themselves from delusion (12.64). Śiva is everything, the coming and going of his breath is the creation and dissolution of the universe. (12.65).

> When four-faced Brahmā was born
> he sat atop the pericarp

[27] gatārthatattvapratipattihetutāṃ matiḥ kutas te timirānuṣaṅgiṇī/
prabhāsamānā gaṇanātha dṛśyate na ratnadīpasya śikhā sakajjalā//12.23//

of the lotus in the navel of Viṣṇu, Mura's foe,
who lay on the coils of Śeṣa the serpent
who was in the belly of Śiva
who'd swallowed the ocean.[28]

Śiva grants salvation to the soul (12.67 and 68). A pure intellect, one comprehending the essence (the *tattvas*) of Śiva, ought to settle the matter in hand (12.69). You ought to get Śiva's permission and then follow the correct procedure (12.70). He concludes,

They who know their foe
subdue him by a harsh expedient
when he is harsh,
by a mild expedient
when he is mild:
the sun always makes the sunstone blaze,
and the moon moistens the moonstone—
each by means of its own radiance.[29]

The assembly is pleased with this speech (12.79 and 80). As the gods nod approval, the agitation of their ear-ornaments seems to be the darkness of delusion dispelled via their ears (12.81).

The speeches go on and on. Next is Caṇḍeśvara, advocating immediate battle. In the bedchamber of battle Fortune submits to the man whose sharp nails are arrows (13.54). Abandoning her lotus-couch where bees were her bards, Fortune, lusting for heroes, dwells in the grove of sword-blades (13.56). What has ratiocination to do with the field of battle? (13.78). Let us go the bedchamber of battle (13.79–82).

There follows Puṣpahāsa, who in his modesty confesses to croaking like an old crow, and who advocates caution. He reminds them of Andhaka's might, Andhaka whose very name put a bad taste in the mouths of the gods (14.18). All this talk of 'fortitude' is downright stupidity (14.22). One must begin with conciliation. One whose anger is unremitting first puts a bright smile on his face (14.25). In a sustained and effective sequence of verses he

[28] amuṣya garbhīkṛtasāgarodarapratiṣṭhaśeṣoragabhogaśāyinaḥ/
muradviṣo nābhisarojakarṇikāviṭaṅkapīṭhaḥ samabhūc caturmukhaḥ//12.66//

[29] tīkṣṇena tīkṣṇam aniśaṃ mṛdunā mṛduṃ ca
saṃsādhayanti paramaupāyikena tajjñāḥ/
sūryopalaṃ dinapatir jvalayaty abhīkṣṇam
induś ca candramaṇim ārdrayati svadhāmnā//12.78//

demands whether or not victory is spoiled by the death of one's companions; victory proclamations by the wailing of the enemy's wives; chowries by the beating of vultures' wings; the festive garlands by festoons of entrails dangling from jackals' mouths; the wanton chaplets of love by arrowheads gleaming like blue-lotus petals (14.41–50).

Praising policy—

> No politic man would suddenly attack
> a foe whose great valour he had not weighed.
> Who would stick his hand into a hole in an anthill
> when there's risk of snakes?[30]

he concludes by advocating peace, and fraternization with the foe: let the gods and the demons rejoice together in the avenues of the Nandana grove (14.58).

The next *sarga* begins with some warriors eager for battle; others, however, who are full of policy, bend their heads, unable to fix on any expedient, their gaze vacant, their straight backs bent. Then speaks Nandiṣeṇa, who calls policy 'fear', and who describes at length the sad condition of Indra's conquered and occupied heaven (15.21–30). So eager is this speaker for battle that he reprobates even Śiva for his inactivity (15.34). He points out that diplomacy is useless in the present situation: there is no scope for conciliation since Andhaka has attained lordship through universal devastation, and his followers fixedly hate the gods (15.42).

He points out that Śiva has only to frown for a moment and the happiness of the enemies' women will be only a memory (15.45). At doomsday Śiva swallows the universe (15.48). This does not stop him again reproving Śiva:

> If this one had exerted himself
> and slain the foe
> who has brought misfortune on the world,
> the gods would not have been humiliated.[31]
>
> What more can I say?
> O Lord,

[30] vidviṣaty atulitoruvikrame vikrameta sahasā na nītimān/
ko nu saṃśayitapannage karaṃ vāmalūravivare vinikṣipet//14.55//

[31] dviṣatām ayatiṣyatāyam eko bhuvanopaplavadāyināṃ vadhe cet/
samapatsyata nedṛśo nikāras tad ayaṃ nākasadāṃ sadaiva tebhyaḥ//15.50//

through the favourable opportunity you've given them,
the demons will make all the gods
just a memory,
for they won't grow again.[32]

He shortly afterwards qualifies this last statement: although Agni has been extinguished, he will live as the fire of separation (15.56); Vāyu will live on in the sighs of Indra's harem (15.57); Varuṇa, evaporated by the fire of the enemy's missiles, will live again in the harem's tears (15.58).

And, slaying Yama,
the demon warriors will break open
the gates of hell,
gleefully laughing
as they drag out the multitudes of the departed.[33]

Immediate attack is the only course left open to them (15.62). Śiva's armies in their thousands must march upon the foe, Death running in front of them, open-mouthed (15.64).

The debate of the *gaṇa*-lords is brought to its conclusion by Śikhaṇḍin. He begins by praising the faculty of speech, which comes from Śiva himself (16.6); but, after praising policy, quickly proceeds to enumerate the mighty deeds of Andhaka and his henchmen: Kālaketu, the dust raised by whose onslaught reminded the gods of the smoke when Śiva burned Tripura (16.19); Timira, who is compared to the Vedic *apratiratha* protective *mantra* (16.33); Kāladamana, whose advancing armies shake the earth like Śiva's *tāṇḍava* dance (16.41); Bhāvayavya, who unseated Brahmā by ripping the lotus out of Viṣṇu's navel (16.49). Other demons are praised, then the exploits of Viṣṇu are listed (16.68–75), but in verse 76, which concludes the sequence and at last mentions Viṣṇu's name, we are told that it was through fear of the afore-mentioned demons that Viṣṇu became a boar and a lion.

Śikhaṇḍin then says,

I've said enough for now
about these many celebrated and self-controlled demons—

[32] bahunā kim udīritena nātha tvadupekṣāvasareṇa daityalokaḥ/
sakalān apunaḥprarohahetoḥ smṛtiśeṣān amarān vidhāsyate'sau//15.51//

[33] vinihatya yamaṃ ca daityayodhā narakadvārakavāṭasaṃpuṭālīḥ/
dalayanti purā paretacakraprasabhākarṣaṇaharṣabaddhahāsāḥ//15.59//

and there are others!
I'll tell you the really essential point:
the heart of policy, pronounced by the wise,
is knowing the strength and the weakness
of both one's own side and the opposing one.[34]

Therefore an envoy should be sent, for an envoy is as good as a spy for discerning the true state of the foe (16.79). And if the foe does not accede to a friendly suit, let there be all-out war (16.80). He ends:

All that I've said
had been full of policy—
I've no fear of the demons.
Our lord now sits mulling over the matter.
What other factors does he take into consideration?
We cannot follow him in transcending reason.[35]

The *sarga* and the whole debate ends abruptly:

His cheeks grazed by the points
of his swinging ear-ornaments,
he vehemently made a speech
in accord with political science,
and fell silent.
Śiva the trident-bearer assented;
appointed Kālamusala
to the office of envoy to the enemy;
and left the assembly
to a triumphant farewell shouted out by the heralds.[36]

Thereupon, with the sound of the midday conch, begins the long central section of the poem, which is brought to an end by the bards' song to Śiva, wakening him on the morning of the day

[34] kiṃ kīrtitair bahubhir atra kṛtātmabhis tair
anyaiś ca sāram idam eva nanu bruve vaḥ/
śaṃsanti nītihṛdayaṃ sudhiyas tad etad
ālocyate svaparapakṣabalābalaṃ yat//17.77//

[35] iti nayaguṇagarbhaṃ kīrtitaṃ vo mayaitan
na mama ditisutebhyaḥ kācid asty atra bhītiḥ/
vibhur ayam adhunāste kāryadolādhirūḍhaḥ
kim aparam iti tarkātītamārgaṃ na vidmaḥ//16.81//

[36] ity āndolitaratnakuṇḍalaśikhānirghṛṣṭagaṇḍasthalo
vākyaṃ nītipathānusāri rabhasād uktvā vyaraṃsīd asau/
śaṃsan sādhv iti tac ca kālamusalaṃ dūtye niyojya dviṣaḥ
śūlī bandijanābhyudīritajayajyotkāram aujjhīt sabhām//16.82//

following the debate (*sarga* 29). In the thirtieth *sarga*, Kālamusala worships Śiva's feet, and flies off into the sky to Indra's heaven, a long and involved journey. At last, unwearied but heavy-hearted at the task before him, he arrives at Indra's mountain and crosses the ruby *gopuram*. The delights of heaven are described in *sarga* 31 and the first third of *sarga* 32 before he gets to meet Andhaka. The envoy bows politely, though without lowering his head too much (32.57), to the lord of the demons who is seated on his royal throne like Durgā on her lion (32.48). Receiving Kālamusala amiably, Andhaka wonders how it is that Śiva has at last remembered him (32.62). It gives him very great pleasure to be thus noticed, but he cannot imagine why the envoy has been sent (32.65–7). Kālamusala responds with fulsome praise of the demon lord, prior to urging him to take his demons back to Pātāla, underground, where they belong, and to leave heaven to its rightful owners. In conclusion, the envoy suggests that gods and demons should drink together and enjoy themselves in heaven (presumably by way of a farewell party for the demons).

The smile does not leave Andhaka's face; with a pleasant twitch of his brow he directs Uśanas, famed councillor to the demons, to reply. Uśanas praises Andhaka in a sequence of seven verses which ends thus:

> Wretched *gaṇa*! Dolt!
> Aren't you afraid
> thus to utter
> before Andhaka who contemptuously defeated Viṣṇu
> a speech glib in the wayward way
> one would expect from *gaṇa* monkeys,
> flibbertigibbets by nature.[37]
>
> The message you have delivered is muddled—
> first terrifying, forecasting demons' doom;
> afterwards, remarkably full of sweetness.
> You have really rather confused us.[38]

[37] helāvinirjitaharer na puro'bhidhātum
asyāsti te'tra gaṇakheṭa khaṭuṅka śaṅkā/
itthaṃ nisargataralapramathaplavaṅga-
saṃsaragadurlalitatāsuvacaṃ vacaḥ kim//33.11//

[38] prāgdarśitāsuravināśavibhīṣikeṇa
mādhuryasaṃbhṛtiviśeṣajuṣā ca paścāt/
saṃdeśadānavacasā śabalena te'tra
cetaḥ kṛtaṃ kim api naḥ pratipattimūḍham//33.12//

Uśanas praises Andhaka and his followers, twice mentioning Andhaka as smiling (33.16 and 24). In his great compassion Andhaka spared the gods when he had defeated them (33.14 and 24): who then deserves to live down in hell? (33.24).

Trembling with indignation, Śiva's envoy filled the hall with his voice, roaring like a mountain torrent (33.25). All this assembly will come to rue the day Uśanas was appointed chief adviser (33.26). I was speaking entirely to the point in not wishing the whole world to be embroiled in a war between gods and demons. You must be an idiot to misunderstand that! (33.27). A person with an eye-disease cannot see anything properly (33.28). The envoy sings the praises of Viṣṇu for five verses, and allots an equal number of verses to the great bird he rides on. Then he mentions the *gaṇa* army. The *gaṇas*, with all the fierce speed of Śiva whose diversion it is to destroy the universe, will shatter the demons (33.44). Even without the other *gaṇas*, Kālamusala will himself alone make hell the demons' dwelling by turning Meru (where they now live) upside down (33.45).

The next *sarga* begins, as did *sarga* 7, with the allegorical figure of Wrath entering the assembly-hall; and as before in Śiva's assembly, there is a description in one verse of each angry member of the assembly. This review of demons is followed by more general descriptions of the raging group; the *sarga* ends with an impressive display of omens in the sky, all unfavourable to the demons.

The commotion among the demons continues for the first seven verses of the following *sarga*.

> Shaking their forefingers at the *gaṇa*-lord,
> maddened for battle
> they threatened him:
> 'You must die this day,
> you who pronounce uncouth and obscure words
> all disordered in our assembly.'[39]
>
> Others in their wrath stood up
> and closing their fine fingers
> raised tight clenched fists to strike,
> then biting their fierce lips

[39] adyaiva te'stu nidhanaṃ sadasīty aśakla-
kliṣṭākṣaraṃ nigadataḥ kramayogaśūnyam/
saṃtarjayatsu taralīkṛtatarjanīkam
itthaṃ gaṇādhipatim āhavadurmadeṣu//35.5//

as they remembered that envoys were invulnerable
they slowly sat down on their seats.[40]

Andhaka, however, is still smiling charmingly (35.9), and he admonishes his followers. That the demons should tremble at this envoy's speech is like the great mountains shaking at the fluttering of a young sparrow's wing (35.11).

What this envoy of Śiva's has said
so coolly,
is just like a child.
All that sort of thing can be said
in ‹one's father's house›/‹a graveyard›
where ‹mother›/‹the Mātṛs› will listen eagerly.[41]

This hall is the abode of the real lord of the three worlds,
not an inauspicious cemetery full of jackals and corpses;
these demons are doomsday winds
to pound to powder the enemy mountains,
not *gaṇa* monkeys.[42]

The demons are in full possession of heaven. Are they not feeding the geese of Brahmā's chariot on the fibres of the lotus he, their leader, ripped from Viṣṇu's navel? (35.27). He will defeat Śiva. His dark swordblade will soon be the *kālakūṭa* poison in Śiva's throat (35.43). At the front of his forces, after he has swallowed up the three worlds he will drink up Kālarātri, the goddess of the night of death, like a column of smoke (35.48). When the dark night of his swordblade falls, Pārvatī, like a sheldrake duck,[43] will have to quit Śiva's side and endure loneliness (35.61).

[40] saṃrambhagāḍhavalitāṅgulipallavāgram
udgūrya muṣṭim apareṣu ruṣābhihantum/
utthāya daṣṭavikaṭauṣṭham avadhyadūta-
buddhyā śanair upaviśatsu nijāsaneṣu//35.6//

[41] yad bālabhāvasulabhaṃ śaśalakṣmamauli-
dūto'bhyadhād ayam aśaṅkitacittavṛttiḥ/
vaktuṃ kṣamaṃ pitṛgṛhe tad aśeṣam eva
śrotāsti yatra rabhasena sa mātṛvargaḥ//35.13//

[42] trailokyasāragurudhāma sadaḥ kilaitan
naiva śmaśānam aśivātma śivāśavāḍhyam/
daityā ime ripukulācalacakravāla-
niṣpeṣakalpamaruto na gaṇaplavaṃgāḥ//35.14//

[43] *cakravākī*. The convention of *kāvya* is that at sunset, 'The *cakravāka* birds (a species of sheldrake) suffer the pangs of love and exchange a final embrace, for they must be parted till the sun rises again.' Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 263.

However, a proponent of policy, Kanakākṣa, at once censures his leader for losing control of himself (36.3). It is true that Andhaka alone is able to immediately destroy all the gods (36.8). But Viṣṇu is very mighty, as are Tārkṣya, Gaṇapati, Skanda, Nandin, and various *gaṇas*. It is folly not to take the foe seriously (36.56). The undertakings of dim-witted people invariably turn out otherwise than they expect: when the immensely strong *śarabha* scratches his back with an elephant, he is crushed by it! (36.59). They should agree to Śiva's proposal (36.60).

Last to speak for the demons is Vajrabāhu, who abuses the gods and vaunts his own valour in the most egotistical of all the speeches of the poem.

Let it be Viṣṇu with his discus in the battle,
or Balarāma with his club,
let it be Śiva with his tridents
or Indra with his thunderbolt—
without a weapon
I'll turn their faces grey
when I strike with my bare arm![44]

Kālamusala, bold but calm, launches into praise of the goddess of speech, Sarasvatī, and then permits himself a disquisition on the twin topics of good and bad men, and true and false praise.

The speech of rogues is refractory,
their words have no contact with reality.
So how can such a deluded person
not praise himself
and wickedly abuse the good deeds of the good.[45]

And before giving over the remainder of his speech to praise of the gods, he dispassionately remarks,

[44] cakrāyudho'stu samare musalāyudho vā
śūlāyudho bhavatu vā kuliśāyudho vā/
doṣṇaiva tān aham anena nihatya heti-
śūnyena dhūsaramukhacchavitāṃ nayāmi//37.25//

[45] svacchandatā khalagirāṃ na bhavanti vastu-
tattvaspṛśo jagati kecana tāsu śabdāḥ/
ātmastutiṃ sujanasaccaritāpalāpa-
pāpaṃ ca tena vidadhīta kathaṃ na mūḍhaḥ//38.22//

It was by the authority of Time
that you defeated the gods
who had previously defeated you.
Ah, in this universe
Time plays the game of victory and defeat
without any constraint.[46]

But afterwards his passion mounts, and he concludes his mission by saying that only lack of orders to that effect from Śiva prevents their all being moths in the fire of his anger here and now (38.90).

Keith's comment on the envoy, that he accomplished nothing 'save a prodigious amount of bad rhetoric', could equally be applied to all the speeches. But there was no formal oratory, no rhetoricians' workshops (*officinae rhetorum*), in India.[47] In the *Śiśupālavadha*, Uddhava, wise pupil of Bṛhaspati (the counsellor of the gods), likens a speaker to a weaver:

The skilful can ‹deliver›/‹spread out›
a speech like a piece of cloth,
‹inoffensive›/‹very soft›,
but ‹weighty›/‹smooth›,
‹formulated with many literary merits›/
‹woven with many threads›,
and ‹varied›/‹patterned›.[48]

The *gaṇa* Aṭṭahāsa likens speeches to coconuts:

Wise men who are versed in political science
are tireless in producing speeches in council
like coconut trees their nuts,
containing ‹*rasa*›/‹juice›
and ‹well-composed›/‹round›.[49]

[46] te'pi triviṣṭapasado vijitā bhavabhir
yasyānubhāvavaśato vijitair api prāk/
kālo nirargalatayā bhuvanatraye'tra
krīḍaty aho jayaparājayalīlayāsau//38.39//

[47] Sylvain Lévi noted that the Hindus 'have never analysed or set out the principles of composition'; but was he correct in stating 'their social life called for neither the agora nor the forum' ('La Suite des Idées dans les Textes Sanscrits', p. 91)? Every king had his *sabhā*, like Śiva and Andhaka.

[48] *Śiśupālavadha* 2.74:
mradīyasīm api ghanām analpaguṇakalpitām/
prasārayanti kuśalāś citrāṃ vācaṃ paṭīm iva//

[49] abhīkṣṇam antaḥ sarasāny atandritāḥ suvṛttatāṃ bibhrati nītiśālinaḥ/
vitanvate saṃsadi kūrcakesaradrumāḥ phalanīva vacāṃsi sūrayaḥ//12.24//

Are these indigenous notions of the art of speaking bad in themselves? Surely not. Moreover the *gaṇas* and demons in the *Haravijaya* are composite creatures, being in addition to their mythological roles courtiers and even kings; it is right for them to have their own prodigious mode of discourse. It was, above all, the length, 'the prodigious amount', of these speeches that was not to Keith's taste, I would guess; but the Indian genius readily seeks extremes. And as Aṭṭahāsa says, the wise are tireless in producing speeches.

It is the *gaṇas* who play the largest part in the *sargas* we have just glanced at. To understand what passes for their rhetoric, we must first understand what they are. The *gaṇas* belong to a group of semi-divine beings which includes *yakṣas*, *vidyādharas*, and *kiṃpuruṣas*. The word *gaṇa* means 'host', and the *gaṇas* appear in the Vedas as an 'indefinite host of partial manifestations of [Rudra's] own nature which, like this god (in the singular) himself, may make their numinous presence felt everywhere and at any time.'[50]

In classical times, Śiva

> personifies the collective principle, the cosmic form which is one indivisible whole as the supreme divinity. But he manifests himself in creation as so many *gaṇas*. The one becomes the many, and this is creation. Each *gaṇa* symbolises the principle of individualization and Śiva is the lord of all the *gaṇas*. A *gaṇa* is aptly designated as a Pramatha, a turbulent unit of energy, challenging and aggressive, possessing a destructive tendency, unless controlled by the master and in tune with his cosmic dance.[51]

This description, based on sculptural representations, admirably fits the *gaṇas* of the Haravijaya. (In *sarga* 2, they dance prior to Śiva's performance of the *tāṇḍava* dance.)

Another important description of the *gaṇas* as they are to be found in sculpture is that given by Stella Kramrisch:

Cf. Mallinātha's description of Bhāravi's poetry:

nārikelaphalasammitaṃ vaco bhāraveḥ sapadi tad vibhajyate/
svādayantu rasagarbhanirbharaṃ sāram asya rasikā yathepsitam//

Aṭṭahāsa's analogy is discussed below, p. 175.

[50] J. Gonda, *Viṣṇuism and Śivaism* (London, 1970), p. 4.

[51] Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *Studies in Indian Art* (Varanasi, 1965), p. 231.

> Breath, the vital manifestation of the Spirit, is the support and prime mover of all action; it is shown having formed a body of its own which is particularly that of the Gaṇas. They are mere quantities (gaṇa = quantity), look like windbags, hosts of them. Their bodies inflated by air race in gusts across the atmosphere, support the Vimānas, the chariots of the gods, and produce the music out of the sound which is immanent in the ether and in the air. Full of it, they play it on different instruments and make it as articulate as their air-borne, air-filled bodies are made by the sculptor.[52]

The obvious comment here of the unsympathetic reader—and perhaps not only the unsympathetic—is that Ratnākara's *gaṇas* are windbags indeed. But the *gaṇas* are the epitome of lack of restraint even as sculptured forms, as Fergusson, speaking of the rock-cut temples at Badami, brings out:

> ...in each compartment [of the platform of the Great Cave] two of those little fat dwarfs or *gaṇas* that are such favourites with the early Hindu sculptors for the decoration of basements, and which they were fond of representing in every possible attitude and in every form of grimace, even with the heads of animals. All sects—Brāhmaṇs, Buddhists, and Jains—seem to have employed such figures in similar roles; in fact they appear to have been conventionalities dependent more upon the taste and imagination of the craftsmen than upon the mythology of the sect for which any particular temple was constructed.[53]

There is nothing in the *Haravijaya* to suggest that Ratnākara's *gaṇas* in their appearance resemble the fat little dwarfs of sculpture, apart from the demons' calling them monkeys. Their physical form seems to be human, whereas the *Liṅga Purāṇa*, for instance, speaks of them as lion-faced. The *gaṇa* supporting Śiva in the Ellora representation of the impaling of Andhaka is a straightforward human shape. Some of the *gaṇas* are clearly minor versions of Śiva. Fire from Krodheśvara's third eye splits the skulls on his crown (7.18); Kālamusala wears a great black snake (8.4); Śikhaṇḍin's sacred thread is a snake (16.3); and a snake binds Vahnigarbha's matted locks (10.10). Trimūrti and Bhṛṅgiriṭi are endowed with third eyes (7.8 and 12). Two *gaṇas* have names in common with Śiva: Aṭṭahāsa (*sarga* 12) and

[52] Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple* (Calcutta, 1946), Vol. 2, p. 344.

[53] J. Fergusson, 'Rock-cut Temples at Bādāmi, in the Dekhan', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VI, December 1877, pp. 354–66, see especially p. 355.

Caṇḍeśvara (7.19 and *sarga* 13). Several names express or include fire;[54] others darkness,[55] and death.[56] Two are famous aspects or emanations of Śiva: Vīrabhadra (7.5) and Āmardaka (7.30). Apart from these two, the only *gaṇa* whose name is known outside the poem is Bhṛṅgiriṭi, well known as an attendant on Śiva, but not strictly speaking a *gaṇa* according to other sources.

The *gaṇas*, as also the demons, are courtiers and warriors. Some even are kings. When Vahnigarbha set out to conquer the world, his armies distressed the snake who holds up the earth (10.5). Aṭṭahāsa, making his kingdom secure (12.10), conquered a host of kings (12.12). Caṇḍeśvara addresses his audience as those who contemptuously overthrow kings (13.39). Puṣpahāsa gathers in his taxes quickly (14.5). In the palaces of the foes of the demon Dhūmaketu, the unfinished mural portraits, whose eyes will never open now, getting grimy, seem to meditate night and day on the mutability of Fortune (16.65).

The *gaṇas* are true courtiers. Kālamusala, advocate of immediate war, who declares in Śiva's hall that he will cut Andhaka's throat (8.41), when he stands before the demon lord tells him that he is the one priceless jewel in the ocean of *saṃsāra* (32.72). How can the waxing and waning moon compare with the milk ocean of his fame (32.83)? Andhaka's mind is a shining mirror of wisdom, reflecting the entire corpus of works on political science (32.85). Who has the eloquence to tell his virtues, who can count the grains of sand on the ocean shore? (32.87). Most of the speeches have a large element of laudation: Kālamusala praises Śiva (*sarga* 8); Prabhāmaya, Harihara (*sarga* 9); Vahnigarbha, Viṣṇu (*sarga* 10); Agnidaṃṣṭra, several gods (*sarga* 11); Puṣpahāsa, Andhaka (*sarga* 14).

Notwithstanding a lack of formal training in oratory in the Hindu tradition (so far as we know), court formality is evident in the beginnings of the *gaṇas*' speeches. They usually begin by praising the foregoing speech, express modesty, and then abruptly controvert the foregoing speaker. Their modesty, their confessions to croaking like an old crow, are of course directly parallel to the exordium of Western rhetoric, with its *excusatio propter infirmitatem*. More characteristically Indian, though no

[54] E.g. Śikhin (7.9), Anala (7.11), Agnika (7.17), Agniketu (7.29), Śikhitama (7.44).

[55] E.g. Meghanīla (7.7), Nīlavajra (7.43), Abhraketu (7.47).

[56] E.g. Kāla (7.38), Antaka (7.39), Lulāyaketu (7.21).

doubt there are parallels to be found, is the sudden transition to abuse of the preceding speech—the desire to astonish at any cost. Thus, Aṭṭahāsa first says that it is not surprising that Agnidaṃṣṭra has spoken a speech delightful to everybody (12.20), then, having said that he himself must speak—dirty rock produces shining gold (12.21 and 22), he says that Agnidaṃṣṭra clings to darkness (12.23). Caṇḍeśvara dispenses with modesty. Aṭṭahāsa's speech is a wishing-tree in full bloom (13.13); how can it not be wonderful, how can nectar not pour forth from the moon (13.14); Sarasvatī, goddess of speech, cannot speak so well as that (13.15). And yet, the speech is a tissue of errors (13.16). After Caṇḍeśvara, the speakers dispense with attacks on their predecessors, and the gravity of the situation is increasingly stressed. The audience is to disregard the slightness of Nandiṣeṇa's eloquence—it is the situation they are in that is offensive (15.18).

The *gaṇas* are deeply impressed with the phenomenon of speech; they also refer to literary forms. Aṭṭahāsa likens dubious enterprises to bad poetry (12.32); Nandiṣeṇa likens Śiva's third eye to a poem, the one setting Kāma ablaze, the other portraying love (15.49). And Ratnākara likens Nandiṣeṇa's foes to a poem in Prakrit, the former losing their pride, the latter lacking spirants (*anūṣmatāṃ dadhāna*) (15.7).

What is conspicuously lacking from these speeches, however, is nothing less than *nītiśāstra*, *rājadharma*, political theory! Keith is wide of the mark when he speaks of Ratnākara displaying 'his perfection in the art of politics'. Of the nine speakers in Śiva's assembly, only three refer specifically to 'the art of politics'. Technical terms are mentioned less than twenty times in all these hundreds of verses. And such is the sophistication of these *gaṇa* courtiers, that for the most part any technical reference is punningly linked to the terms of another discipline. Thus, *mantra*, state policy, said by Kauṭilya to have five constituent parts (means to undertake actions; command of men and money; proper discrimination of time and place; remedies for emergencies; and success), is, declares Prabhāmaya, as useful to the would-be conqueror as the five 'winds' that support the human body (9.74). Aṭṭahāsa likens the five parts of state policy to the five constituents of all medicines (12.31); Puṣpahāsa, to the five parts of a syllogism (14.27) The six means to be adopted in

foreign policy (peace, war, march, halt, stratagem, and recourse to the protection of a mightier king) are likened to the six faces of Kumāra (12.48). There is nothing in the *Haravijaya* (or for that matter in the poems of Bhāravi and Māgha) approaching the grim reality of Aśvaghoṣa's remark that kings who wish to keep their crowns guard their sons.[57]

But the issue before the *gaṇas* is a simple one: should they attack at once, or should they parley with the foe? The debate is a counterbalancing of temperaments, a struggle between conflicting emotions, above all a rhythmic alternation between extreme wrath and restrained wrath wherein talk of politics is only a means of showing moderation and coolness. These *sargas* are an orchestrated symphony of fury. Each *gaṇa* is 'a turbulent unit of energy'[58]. They 'produce music out of the sound which is immanent in the ether in the air'[59]—Vahnigarbha says he is a flute that is made to play by the breath of Prabhāmaya's speech (10.12). They are each individual manifestations of the fury in which Śiva destroys the universe. This fury is manifested visually. Their shouts are accompanied by smoke: smoke came from Agniketu's mouth like snakes from their hole in an anthill (7.29); from Āmardaka's like a line of bees from the lotus that is the world (7.30). In addition they are described by that device of *kāvya* which may be called solidification of light, a process entirely consonant with the varied and arbitrary sculptural representation of the *gaṇas*. Many things in *kāvya* are thought to emit more light than they really do: thus teeth cast forth beams of white light, and jewels can give off enough light to serve as lamps. What I call solidification of light is the likening of such emitted light to concrete objects. Thus, Durdarśamūrti, considering the tree that was his arm to be his only help in battle, stroked it with his hand and simultaneously watered it with the floods of water that were the rays from his finger-nails (7.16) Nīlavajra smiles scornfully at the thought of battle with the demons, and the rays from his teeth make the quarters blossom (7.43). When Agnidaṃṣṭra shook like the ocean, he covered the horizon with the foam of his laugh (11.1). More solid, more striking, is this instance:

[57] *Buddhacarita* 2.55—a reference to Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* 1.17: a son is potentially a king's most dangerous enemy.

[58] Agrawala, *Studies in Indian Art*, p. 231.

[59] Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol. 2, p. 344.

While he furiously slapped his mighty shoulders,
the projecting rays from his bright finger-nails
appeared like the mane of a lion
of irresistible strength
cooped up
in the strong cage of his arms.[60]

When, in the second *sarga*, the *gaṇas* dance, they are the *rasas* incarnate (2.22). Their speeches, in Aṭṭahāsa's memorable pun, are coconuts full of *rasa* (12.24). But Aṭṭahāsa was talking generally, for the other pun in that verse—*suvṛtta* '‹well-constructed›/‹round›' contradicts his later expressed opinion that the *gaṇas*' utterances are disordered as a result of their obsession with impetuous violence (12.55). The speeches are not models of logical argument. The speakers did not so intend them. They were designed to sway their emotionally energetic audience one way or the other. The speakers themselves move in accord with their emotions: Prabhāmaya's shoulders shake in his desire to speak (9.1); Nandiṣeṇa, about to contradict Puṣpadanta, blinks at the weightiness of the matter (15.14).

A. B. Keith's opinion of the envoy's eloquence is, as we have seen, shared by the demons' guru; the words of Uśanas are worth repeating:

O wretched *gaṇa*! Dolt!
Aren't you afraid
thus to utter
before Andhaka who contemptuously defeated Viṣṇu
a speech glib in the wayward way
one would expect from *gaṇa* monkeys,
flibbertigibbets by nature.

The message you have delivered is muddled—
first terrifying, forecasting demons' doom;
afterwards, remarkably full of sweetness.
You have really rather confused us.[61]

But in fact Kālamusala's opening address to the assembly of the

[60] tasya ghnataḥ karatalena karālam aṃsa-
kūṭaṃ ruṣā nakhamayūkhaśikhāḥ khacantyaḥ/
ūhuḥ kaṭhorabhujapañjarapuñjyamāna-
durvāravikramamṛgendrasaṭāvilāsam//11.5//

[61] 33.11 and 12. Sanskrit text given above, p. 165.

demons is particularly clearly structured: praise of Andhaka; an exposition of the proper order of the universe; the suggestion that the demons return to their proper place; and expressions of friendship. Kālamusala's second speech to the demons is said by the demons to be 'uncouth, obscure, and disordered' (35.5); and Andhaka calls it childish talk (35.13). Are they too, like Keith, discerning 'bad rhetoric'? It is noteworthy that the description of Indra's city, under demon occupation, includes analogies to dancing, painting, music, drama, philosophy, and grammar; no mention is made of any of these except music when Śiva's city is described at the beginning of poem. It is conceivable that, if the poem did reflect any contemporary situation, the Kashmiris were in conflict with a rich and even more cultured country. As for being uncouth, we may note that Rājaśekhara mocks the pronunciation of the Kashmiris.[62]

The essential fact, however, is that the *gaṇas*, like children, are creatures of the emotions. Moreover, in sculpture 'The *gaṇas* are represented in the pose of frolicking young boys. They are the wonderful Boy Heroes submitting to the power of the Eternal Yogī...'[63] At the same time as being polished courtiers concerned with correctness of speech (10.11; 'correctly pronounced words', 12.17; 12.32; 13.10; 15.15) the *gaṇas* are the uncontrolled emotions of childhood. Yet again, in the words of Stella Kramrisch, 'Their bodies inflated by air race in gusts across the atmosphere.'[64] And in the words of Nandiṣeṇa:

> Let these *gaṇas* buckle on their armour for the battle
> and, massed like the conglomerate clouds of doomsday,
> let them sweep across the sky
> roaring dreadfully.[65]

As fragments of the force of Śiva, the *gaṇas* are enormously powerful, in addition to being unstable.

The destructive fire of Śiva is held in a steady state at the bottom of the ocean, waiting until it is needed at doomsday.[66]

[62] *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* Baroda ed., p. 34, line 12: karṇe guḍūcīgaṇḍūṣas teṣām pāṭhakramaḥ.
[63] Agrawala, *Studies in Indian Art*, p. 231.
[64] Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol. 2, p. 344.
[65] kavacāni pinehivāṃsa ete samarāya pramathāḥ saghoragarjāḥ/
kṣayakālaghanāghanaughaghāṭiṃ dadhatu vyoma javād vilaṅghayantaḥ//15.39//
[66] See O'Flaherty, *Mythology of Śiva*, pp. 286–92.

This fire, described in detail by Prabhāmaya (9.28–37), is often an analogy in *kāvya* for the fierceness of the brave man. It is particularly appropriate with regard to the *gaṇas*, given their special relationship to Śiva. Kālamusala (10.45), Caṇḍeśvara (13.7), and Puṣpahāsa (14.3) are compared to the submarine fire; other *gaṇas* are called doomsday fires. Clearly, the *gaṇas* are not only boys, they are also men. They are men in their boldness, their courage, and their strength, but boys in their lack of self-control and their bragging. It is the *vidyādharas* who are supermen;[67] the *gaṇas* are, arguably, more human than most other Indian semi-divine beings.

What of the demons? They have much in common with the *gaṇas*, not least their names, many of which are closely similar to those of the *gaṇas*. Indeed, one name, Agnidaṃṣṭra, is shared by a *gaṇa* and demon, unless we suppose the *gaṇa* a renegade. Andhaka (16.16) and other demons are likened to the submarine fire. Andhaka, according to Kālamusala's first speech before the demon lord, is noble and merciful; but, as Wendy O'Flaherty says, 'the demons are dangerous by definition, regardless of their intentions.'[68] The *gaṇas* are white, the demons are black:

> Now let the *gaṇa*-lords, ash-white in colour,
> break up the demon army,
> murksome in its dread darkness,
> assailing it in all the quarters,
> as the separating rays of Śiva's great laugh
> break up the night of doomsday.[69]

But in the *Haravijaya* the demons are black in a real sense. Andhaka is 'the blind one', even though he gained sight, and even though Ratnākara omits most details of the myth.[70] Ratnākara does refer several times to the fact that Uśanas, adviser to the demons, spent a long time inhaling smoke as an

[67] See above, p. 83.

[68] Wendy O' Flaherty, *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1976), p. 98.

[69] bhasmāvadātarucayo vinipatya dikṣu
ghorāndhakārakaluṣāṃ pramathādhināthāḥ/
bhindantu dānavacamūm adhunāṭṭahāsa-
cchedā iva pralayakālaniśāṃ smarāreḥ//13.74//

[70] For the details and the meaning of the myth of Andhaka see O'Flaherty, *Mythology of Śiva*, pp. 190–2, and below, pp. 326 ff. and 339 ff.

ascetic exercise (14.30 and 31; 33.26). Having a subterranean home, the demons live in a world of darkness; and as Vahnigarbha says, their vision is thereby impaired (10.21).

The *gaṇas* and the demons both represent the pride and ambition of man. Further, both are powerful, and generally ugly (as their names often state). But they are not the same. The difference may be put in this way. Hinduism sees the world as dominated by huge forces. Some of these forces are well-defined, with a name and a history, and can therefore be related to. But others are strange, unknown and hence untamed, and their very strangeness gives them the edge over the forces that have form—the gods—for most of the time, perhaps. Form has to gather itself together to overcome the unknown, the forces of darkness. The plot of the *Haravijaya* articulates this conflict. However, Siva began, and partly remained, an unorthodox, outsider figure, whose power was so great that it inevitably spilled over, to give life to the unformed, demon-like *gaṇas* who attend him. The *gaṇas* have the supreme advantage of being on the right side. They are human, not inhuman. They are the unbounded powers of the human psyche. The demons are at one and the same time an indistinct mirror-image of the *gaṇas* and the counter-forces that are the *gaṇas' raison d'être*.

In the Introduction I spoke of 'bringing the poem to life'. It will by now be evident, I hope, that there is a great deal of life in the poem since it contains the *gaṇas*. The poetry of individual verses I have left to speak for itself, which it is well able to do.

CHAPTER 7

The Women in the Poem

There is one impulse behind the historical development of *kāvya* which I have not yet mentioned, namely love. *Kāvya* contains elements of love poetry even when enunciating royal decrees, describing battles, or explaining mathematics. Women, and the symbols of love, bees and lotuses, are all-intrusive. They are inseparable from the medium.

Beautiful, voluptuous women adorned the exterior of temples:[1] terrestrial representations of the nymphs awaiting in heaven the attentions of determined yogins and headstrong heroes. Many of the women in *kāvya* are specifically 'women of the gods' (*apsaras, surasundarī*). Śakuntalā, the most famous heroine of the drama, is the daughter of an *apsaras*. The women of *kāvya* have the ideal and perfect form of statues. Apart from such historical figures as Draupadī, they are indistinguishable one from the other, these women in *kāvya*. Their bodies and their stereotyped patterns of behaviour are designed solely to appeal to men.

The women sculpted on temples appeal not only to men, but to gods, demi-gods, and demons. The whole universe is pleased by their presence there. The success of the artefact is made more likely through the manifestation of their eroticism. The fact that women seem to get everywhere in *kāvya* is linked with their significance in temple and other art. They are a good thing; indeed, they are the good thing, and one cannot have too much of them.

The beautiful woman is not the only female with *kāvya*, and the *Haravijaya* is particularly rich in the range of femininity it presents. In addition to Śrī and Lakṣmī, divine expressions of the beautiful woman, something approximating to 'true love' is

[1] 'Erotic images are the rule in medieval Hindu temples and are not restricted to a few isolated sites. The phenomenon is widespread, covering most of northern India as well as Āndhra Pradesh and Mysore in the South, and is not confined to a limited period but covers almost the entire period of temple construction from the Gupta period to modern times.' Thomas Donaldson, 'Propitious–Apotropaic Eroticism in the Art of Orissa', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXXVII 1/2, pp. 75–100, see especially p. 76.

found in the relationship of Śiva and Pārvatī, which forms the core of the poem; and quite another dimension is brought out by the Mātṛs, who play a prominent part, a dimension that finds its apotheosis in the long hymn to Caṇḍī, wild goddess of destruction, in *sarga* 47. Bearing in mind that these other modalities do exist, it is, however, the basic module which is to be dealt with in this chapter.

Woman in *kāvya* is a beautiful young girl. All women are *yuvati*, 'young'; and all women are *sundarī*. Both words come to mean simply 'woman' in *kāvya*. Not to be both is impossible, inconceivable. This attrition of epithets, a process prominent in the course of *kāvya*'s history, is particularly strong in the case of 'woman', where it without any doubt reaches a peak in the *Haravijaya*. A huge range of expressions, applied as adjectives and adjectival compounds in earlier *kāvya*, is used by Ratnākara to provide nouns meaning 'woman'. Translation is a problem here. It is a matter of taste and judgement whether *mṛgīdṛś*, for example, is to be translated as 'doe-eyed girl', 'doe-eyed woman', 'girl', or 'woman'. Where epithets for 'woman' bear no special relationship to the rest of the verse in which they occur, I translate as 'woman'.

The extent and range of the terms which Ratnākara uses can only be fully appreciated by having them set out. The lists that are given in footnotes below are a complete account of words and epithets meaning little more than 'woman' in *sargas* 1–27. The numbers in brackets denote frequency of occurrence.

A straightforward word for 'woman' is often used.[2] Women are 'young'.[3] Being young, women are generically 'timid';[4] and 'weak'.[5] Women are 'wanton';[6] 'pleasing';[7] and 'beautiful'.[8]

[2] aṅganā (34); nārī (34); puraṃdhrī (38); yoṣā (1); yoṣit (3); vadhū (40); simantinī (13); strī (40); straiṇa 'assemblage of women' (1).

[3] taruṇī (25); bālā (1); yuvati (12); yauvata 'assemblage of women' (1).

[4] bhīru (6).

[5] abalā (1). And also 'silly'—mugdhā (1).

[6] pramadā (6); mahelā (1); lalanā (4); līlāvatī (3); vibhramavatī (2); vilāsavatī (1); vilāsinī (1). The last of these MW gives as 'a charming or lively or wanton or coquettish woman, wife, mistress'. The same range of meanings applies to all these words. *pramadā*, and probably *mahelā*, in origin refer to drunkenness, a common condition of *kāvya*, women. Not given in this list because it is used specifically and precisely is the related term *mattakāśini* (2) 'seemingly drunk'. *vilāsinī* happens to be a technical term for a particular type of courtesan (see R. Schmidt, *Beiträge zur Indischen Erotik* (Leipzig, 1902), pp. 283 ff.), but that sense does not apply in *kāvya*, where, as we shall see, woman, wife, mistress and courtesan are all one.

[7] ramaṇī (10); rāmā (12).

[8] sundarī (18).

They are 'beloved, dear'[9] though as a species rather than as individuals; and they are 'loving'.[10] Women have beautiful thighs;[11] thick thighs;[12] thighs like bananas,[13] like an elephant's trunk.[14] They have (large) buttocks;[15] and slender waists.[16] They are (large-)breasted.[17] They are 'slender'.[18] Their bodies are beautiful.[19] Their limbs are smooth.[20] They are 'moon-faced'.[21] Their brows are curved[22] and beautiful.[23] Their eyes are wide,[24] curved,[25] and beautiful.[26] Their eyes have long eyelashes,[27] and curved ones too.[28] Their eyes are like those of the *cakora* bird (a type of partridge);[29] like those of deer,[30] does,[31] and fawns.[32] Their eyes are tremulous.[33] Lastly, their eyes are like lotuses.[34]

There is a slickness in this multiplicity, and a demeaning of the object referred to. None of the women in the *Haravijaya* have names,[35] whereas the *gaṇas*, representing (more or less) men, do. It is because the women lack any individuality that the name-giving instinct, as it were, runs wild: the precise intellectual tradition, confronted by the anonymity of massed females, has to do something.

En masse these words for 'woman' serve to give an idea of her shape. A compendious description of this shape is provided by a verse from the *Meghadūta*:

[9] kāntā (12); dayitā (7); priyatamā (1); priyā (2); preyasī (1); vallabhā (1); vanitā (4).
[10] kāmavatī (1); kāminī (2). [11] añcitoru (1); varoru (2); vāmoru (1).
[12] ghanoru (1); pīvaroru (2). [13] kadalīdaloru (1). [14] karabhoru (1).
[15] nitambavatī (4); nitambinī (8). [16] chātodarī (2); tanūdarī (1).
[17] stanavatī (2). [18] tanu (4); & tanvī (1) [19] sutanu (4).
[20] natāṅgī (5).
[21] indumukhī (1); induvaktrā (1); induvadanā (1).
[22] añcitabhrū (4); kuṭilabhrū (1); natabhrū (14).
[23] cārubhrū (5); vāmabhrū (11); subhrū (15).
[24] āyatadṛś (1); āyatākṣī (1). [25] añcitākṣī (2). [26] vāmacakṣus (1); sudṛś (19).
[27] pakṣmaladṛś (3); pakṣmalalocanā (1); pakṣmalākṣī (1).
[28] kuṭilapakṣmaladṛś (1). [29] cakoradṛṣṭi (2).
[30] mṛgacakṣus (1); mṛgadṛś (13); mṛgākṣī (1); hariṇadṛś (1); hariṇekṣaṇā (2); hariṇāyatākṣī (1). [31] mṛgīdṛś (1); hariṇīdṛś (1).
[32] mṛgaśāvacakṣus (1). [33] taraladṛś (1).
[34] ambujākṣī (1); aravindadṛś (1); utapalacakṣus (1); utpaladṛś (3); utpalalocanā (1); kamaladṛś (2); kuśeśayadṛś (4); paṅkajākṣī
[35] However, two well-known *apsaras* are mentioned in the description of Mandara: Tilottamā is referred to punningly (5.7); Miśrakeśī is actually present (5.48). And Ratnākara seems to have invented a name for the wife of the demon Hiraṇyākṣa—Manoramā (6.191).

Slender, nut-brown, with tapering teeth, her lip like a ripe red fruit,
Slight in the waist, her eye like a timid doe, with deep-set navel,
Slow-moving from weight of hips, a little stooped with her full breasts,
Thou wilt find there one who shall seem the Creator's masterwork among women.[36]

As is evident from this, 'slender' (*tanvī*) does not signify the willowy look of the 1920s, since the woman is at the same time blessed with heavy hips and full breasts. Though it is true that sculptures of the Pallava period, elongated in a manner reminiscent of El Greco, do manage to combine the standard attributes with a strange lissomeness, in *kāvya* the 'slenderness' is found only in the arms, which are often compared to lotus tendrils.

There is a general correspondence between the women of *kāvya* and the women of sculpture and painting. In both cases the most striking, the most immediately obvious characteristic, is the emphasis given to breasts and hips, an emphasis no doubt universally to be found in female fertility images. These potentially gross characteristics are, however, provided with a symmetrical elegance by an exaggerated attentuation of the waist. Zimmer speaks of this pattern as 'a somewhat bizarre diagram',[37] and goes on to say

> the contrast of the extremely slender mid-portion of the woman's body with the richness and exuberance of the masses above and below ... has had for the Hindu mind a never-ending fascination.[38]

A good instance of this fascination is found in Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā*, where, in the course of a thorough description of the heroine, her waist is described as follows:

> (She was) adorned with a waist which seemed full of sorrow through failure to see her moon-like face that was hidden by the burden of her swelling breasts; which appeared to be filled with

[36] *Meghadūta* 78 (trans. Franklin and Eleanor Edgerton, *The Cloud Messenger* (Michigan, 1964), p. 59):

tanvī śyāmā śikharidaśanā pakvabimbādharoṣṭhī
madhyekṣāmā cakitahariṇīprekṣaṇā nimnanābhiḥ/
śroṇībhārād alasagamanā stokanamrā stanābhyāṃ
yā tatra syād yuvativiṣaye sṛṣṭir ādyeva dhātuḥ//

[37] Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1968), Vol. 1, p. 72.

[38] Ibid., pp. 75 ff.

weariness from the oppression of the urns of her bosom and the circlets of heavy hips; which had apparently conceived a deep resentment for her massy buttocks [i.e. because her waist shrank away from them]; which seemed filled with exhaustion from the restraining hand of the Creator who had compressed it exceedingly; and which had become extremely slender, as if on account of its anxious thought: 'Suppose mine own breasts should fall on me like projections from a height?'[39]

What Zimmer as art-historian sees as a bizarre diagram, the interrelationship of breasts, waists, and hips, is in *kāvya* transmuted into the expression of a no less bizarre psychology. The parts of the body are separate and rival personalities. This passage from *Vāsavadattā* is a particularly concentrated example of a way of looking at things to which Ratnākara is much addicted. Compare,

As if lamenting,
'Girdles are beautiful on the hips,
and jewelled necklaces rest on the breasts,
but we are not adorned,'
the women's waists bore unbounded emaciation.[40]

And,

Just so much
as the outward swelling of the women's breast-pitchers
concealed
the beauty of their moon-like faces,
that much those broad buttocks
spread out over the earth
as if to see that beauty.[41]

[39] *Vāsavadattā*, trans. and ed. Louis H. Gray (New York, 1913), p. 59; Sanskrit text, p. 151, lines 7–13.

[40] kāñcīguṇair viracitā jaghaneṣu lakṣmīr
labdhā sthitiḥ stanataṭeṣu ca ratnahāraiḥ/
no bhūṣitā vayam itīva nitambinīnāṃ
kārśyaṃ nirargalam adhāryata madhyabhāgaiḥ//23.8//

nitambinī is of course a significant epithet here, though I have preferred to dispense with the possible rendering, 'the waist of the big-buttocked women'. Notice how the hips and breasts, both locatives, are passive recipients, whereas the waists are kartṛ: they have to work!

[41] kāntānāṃ kucakalaśair yathāyathohe tuṅgatvaṃ vyavadadhad ānanendulakṣmīm/
tām udvīkṣitum iva tais tathā tathāptair vistāraṃ kṣitir avatastare nitambaiḥ//
17.11//

In the prose-poems of Subandhu and Bāṇa we find full-scale descriptions of particular women's bodies, presenting virtually the whole gamut of the female physique as found in *kāvya*. There is no such description in Ratnākara, or Bhāravi or Māgha, because these works do not have heroines. Kālidāsa gives a long description of Pārvatī in the first *sarga* of the *Kumārasaṃbhava*, taking some nineteen verses to depict her from her toes to her hair. Two or three verses speak of her generally, as a non-alcoholic cause of intoxication, and so on, but all the other verses each deal with a part of her body. Most parts of her body are said to be superior, or at least equivalent, to some other natural phenomenon. Her gait is superior to that of swans, her thighs are better than the trunks of elephants, her arms more delicate than a garland of *śirīṣa* (*Acacia Sirissa*) flowers, her voice surpasses the call of the female cuckoo, her glances equal those of a fawn doe, her hair surpasses that of the yak. Here is something of the rivalry so explicit in the descriptions of the waist looked at above, but here the rivalry is not between different parts of the body, but between those parts and the exterior world. Here delight in form displays a magpie tendency, creating a highly disparate amalgam of comparison.

According to Philip Rawson, the woman of *kāvya* is the model for the women of the visual arts:

> Indian sculptors never developed units of form—basic indivisible forms—covering less ground than the terms of poetic speech. ... The particular strength of the Indian method is that its forms were never multiplied and subordinated beyond the reach of the *poetical* understanding. All compositions are articulated from single enclosed shapes, which do not overlap, and can be understood clearly one by one.[42]

The artist has in mind the analogies of poetry.[43] On the other hand, the poet was surrounded by statues and pictures. It is significant that Kālidāsa compares Pārvatī to a painting at the beginning of his detailed description (*Kumārasaṃbhava* 1.32). Portraiture was highly popular in ancient India. The dramas abound in instances of characters painting each other. It is likely that poets depicting women of ideal beauty had in their

[42] Philip Rawson, *Indian Sculpture* (London and New York, 1966), p. 96.

[43] Ibid., pp. 116–19.

mind's eye the creations of painters and sculptors. At a certain level there must have been a symbiosis between the arts. There is, however, only one feature where I can see specific influence on *kāvya*. When the poets say that breasts are so full that there is not room between them even for a lotus fibre (e.g. *Kumārasaṃbhava* 1.40), they are describing a condition that is not represented in sculpture and can perhaps only occur when breasts are in some way constrained. But in painting, where breasts are almost invariably represented as two perfect circles just touching each other, there is no gap for the lotus thread. As it happens, Ratnākara does not use this particular description. He does compare a motionless woman to a statue (18.54), and a group of women to figures in a painting (17.96).

The purpose of the portraits made in dramas is to bring the absent loved one to the lonely partner; so too the *yakṣa*'s description of his wife in the *Meghadūta*. In a parallel way, the careful detailing of each part of Pārvatī is to create her anew. Just as the statues on temples captured and brought to earth for the purposes and benefit of man the divine nymphs and all the gods; just as meditational techniques brought the chosen god (*iṣṭadevatā*) to the devotee's heart, so too, though without the help of rules and detailed prescriptions, *kāvya* puts together the shape of perfect women in the mind of the reader.

Ratnākara inevitably refers many times to parts of women's bodies; by putting some of these references together his presentation of woman can be brought into focus.

We begin with the feet, for with humans one's gaze rises upwards; with divine beings it sinks to the feet, which are one's point of contact in worship. The feet are lotuses. This, along with face-moons, is the commonest body metaphor in *kāvya*.

> To the geese asking, 'Women,
> where does the bright beauty
> of those lotuses your feet come from?'
> all the anklets then seemed to answer gladly
> with their sweet tinkling.[44]

The conventions of *kāvya* frequently cause the poet to voice curiosity, but, as here, conventions are explained only by other

[44] yā pādānām ujjvalā śrīr amīṣām ambhojānāṃ sā kuto'bhyeti mugdhāḥ/ mañjīraugho mañjunā śiñjitena prītyetīva vyājahārātha haṃsān//18.13//

conventions—there is no breaking out of the closed world. The foot is soft and smooth like a lotus; so too the hand. Limbs are compared to lotus tendrils, on account of their softness and slenderness. As often as not, as in this verse, the metaphorical lotuses are white ones, but the soles of women's feet, and their toe-nails, were painted red with lac. A woman's toes painted with lac looked like Kāma's five arrows of which the barbs are the red *aśoka* flowers (23.4). Women wear anklets; rays from ruby anklets so redden the feet that their red lac is unnoticeable (18.8). Cosmetic colour, like all colour in *kāvya* is unstable: when the women bathe the lac on their feet dissolves in the water and turns the geese into flamingoes (*rājahaṃsas*) (18.56). In the literary iconography of gods, and of kings, toe-nails are of great importance, in as much as they are the part nearest to adorers, upon whom they shine; moonbeams falling onto women's toe-nails are supposed to be the concentrated embodiment of the women's graciousness towards the erring lovers soon to be kneeling before them (23.2).

Little is said about legs. Buttocks, as we have seen, are heavy and hips are wide. When a lover eagerly awaits a woman in front of her rival, her heavy (*guru*) buttocks, the implicit cause of her delay, take on an air of great importance (17.33). When the women jump into the river to bathe, their buttocks, on account of their great weight, are the first parts of their bodies to hit the water (18.90). Hips are broad: on the way to the river, they block the path (18.7). Such breadth is useful, in that it prevents the girdle round the waist from slipping off, a cause of worry to the girdle (17.15).

The pudendum, subject of earnest discussion in the treatises of love (Kāmaśāstra), is totally ignored in *mahākāvya*. Subandhu does begin the description of Vāsavadattā as seen by Kandarpaketu in his dream with the words 'the garland of the gate of the city of delight of her thighs'[45] qualifying the later mentioned girdle. But Ratnākara speaks of 'the city of love' (*kusumaketupurī*) only when a girdle has fallen off and surrounds the woman's feet (23.7). The girdle is the rampart of the city, and the whole woman, not one part of her, is Kāma's city.

Only passingly mentioned are the three folds of skin that

[45] *Vāsavadatta* trans. and ed., Grey, p. 58: jaghanamadananagaratoraṇasrajā (p. 150, last line).

grace woman's belly below the navel. One woman thrived when the furrowed lines on her belly, the ploughed-land of Love, were sprinkled with water from her lover's hand (18.55).

Breasts are large, round, full, like pitchers. A woman hits a man in the back with her breasts, deceitfully declaring that she had not seen him (18.9). When the women bathe, the flopping of their breasts makes waves (18.32). The lover's tight embrace makes breasts two flat circles (27.41), Kāma's cymbals (27.18). Apart from warming lovers in the winter (3.83), breasts have only an erotic function. A creeper suckles a bee-baby (3.76), but women are solely sex objects. Pārvatī is an exception. She and Śiva are loving husband and wife. And though in the Purāṇas Pārvatī is 'sometimes an unsatisfying mother',[46] in the *Haravijaya* it is her breasts alone that serve, metaphorically at least, their proper function:

> When Śiva playfully inclined his face
> to look upon her breast on the other half,
> the silver of his crest-moon reflected there,
> it was just like the pot of nectar
> topped by a wave of the agitated milk-ocean.[47]

Arms are like lotus tendrils (25.5). Hands are like lotuses: when a woman under water put up her hand adorned with sapphire rings it looked like a lotus with clinging bees (18.75).

Faces, too, are lotuses: the bees remark to the lotuses that since at a distance they look like women's faces, proximity to them must be shaming (18.35). Faces are also moons. The wall of Śiva's city formed a basin for the beauty streaming from the women's face-moons (1.23). A white night-lotus burst open by the billowing waves seemed opened to drink the nectar of beauty falling from a woman's face-moon (18.77). When a round mirror is dropped by a woman, it is likened to the moon vanquished by the lustre of her face (23.65).

[46] O'Flaherty, *The Origins of Evil*, p. 337.

[47] līlānatānanatayā pratibimbavarti-
cūḍāśaśāṅkaśakalaṃ kucam ardhabhāge/
yaḥ paśyati sma dadhataṃ dhutadugdhasindhu-
kallolalaṅghitasudhākalaśasya līlām//1.59//

The joint form of Śiva and Pārvatī is being described. The pot of nectar was produced by the churning of the ocean.

The lower lip is red and full, like the bright-red gourd of the *bimba* plant (*Momordica Monadelpha*) (17.23); like coral (17.30); like a ruby (23.54). A streak of betel juice across its middle is a gash from the sword of Love (23.17).

Cheeks are smooth and shining, and are often said to reflect the disc of the moon. Ears and nose are scarcely mentioned.

Eyes are lotuses. The women's eyes and the river's blue-lotuses, lashes and filaments trembling, seemed to laugh at each other in rivalry (18.61). Eyes are wide, reaching to the ear: an eye is doubly jealous of a blue-lotus placed in the ear—the flower looks like the eye and is in a place which rightfully belongs to the eye (23.32). Eyebrows are mobile—they are like dancing-girls (18.28). Eyebrows are shaped like bows: Love defends himself in Śiva's city with the women's eyebrows as his bow and their glances as his arrows (1.20).

Woman's hair is long enough to kiss her buttocks (23.59 and 61). Gathered together in the water it is like a serpent risen from the subterranean world (18.44).

The poet's imagination luxuriates in the rich complexity of woman's body. Her character, by contrast, is perfectly simple, though equally attractive. The situation of the sexes in *mahākāvya* is wholly artificial and ideal: the man is promiscuous, the woman passionate and faithful. It is true that aristocratic society enjoyed a surplus of women. Polygamy, slave girls, and courtesans allowed satiety to men who could afford it. But in *mahākāvya* after Kālidāsa the status of the women is indeterminate. Ratnākara's women are sometimes called *apsaras*, sometimes not; once they are called courtesans (17.36). Bhāravi's *apsaras*, Māgha's *gopīs*, and Ratnākara's quasi-*apsaras* are that wholly unreal creature, the faithful courtesan. Their lovers' unfaithfulness angers them, but they always forgive in the end. The description of amours centres on the woman. The man is a faint figure, flitting about the edge of the stage. It is on the woman, her shape, her moods, her behaviour, that the poet focuses his attention.

Man's romantic love for woman is absent from the classic *mahākāvya* only. In other Indian literature it is often spoken of, but usually satirically. The Jātakas, for instance, abound in cases of men's fond and tender love for women, but taken to extremes and only to show the folly of it. Thus, a man impaled

laments only his failure to steal his wife a new robe. In *Kuṭṭanīmata*, the young hero of the tale Mañjarī is to tell her client, falls deeply in love with the courtesan in that tale—but the ultimate point is the folly of allowing oneself to be tricked. Bāṇa, however, is a rule to himself. In *Kādambarī*, the youth Puṇḍarīka falls so intensely in love with Mahāśvetā that in the night following their encounter he expires in extremity of longing. Puṇḍarīka, however, is the mind-born son of Lakṣmī, and he is thus hardly a typical man—his name means 'Lotus', that most feminine of all flowers. Moreover, it is significant that the deepest passion that Kālidāsa presents, the love of the *yakṣa* for his wife in the *Meghadūta*, is the love of semi-divine creatures, not of man and woman. *Yakṣas* and *kiṃnaras* were notorious for their close and devoted unions—in implicit contradistinction to the human condition, perhaps.

Just how much sexual freedom there was in ancient India, it is impossible to judge. The verses cited by Ānandavardhana include several instances of a woman's adultery—the verses include this one by Rudraṭa:

> 'That's where my aged mother sleeps, and there
> sleeps daddy, the oldest man you've ever met.
> Here sleeps the slave-girl worn out from her chores,
> and here sleep I, who must be guilty
> to deserve these few days absence of my lord.'
> By ruse of statements such as these the youthful wife
> informed the traveler of her intent.[48]

Guilty, adulterous wives figure in *mahākāvya* no more than do household chores.

This last statement must be slightly qualified. The ideal world of *mahākāvya* occasionally is cracked open by a particularly daring pun, and a grosser reality creeps in. Night-lotuses meet with their lover, darkness, in the absence of their husband, the sun, and then give birth to the bees they had previously trapped—these bees are bastards who hate the wombs that gave them birth (*garbhadviṣ*) (20.36). The ocean's wife, the tide, is depressed at being unable to keep clean her offspring—the moon with its spot (22.63). But these are exceptional verses.

[48] *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 812 (trans. Ingalls).

Underlying love as expressed in *mahākāvya* is this lament of Lakṣmīdhara:

> ...where one sleeps in one's own house
> with her one owns subservient to one's wish;
> can this routine of household sex,
> this wretched thing, deserve the name of love?[49]

The ideal world of *mahākāvya* solves this difficulty: there, man adventures freely among women who are always faithful. The adulteress in the stock figure of the *abhisārikā*, 'she who ventures forth', is, it is true, mentioned in *mahākāvya*; but there is no mention of the husband.

The *abhisārikā*, it may be remarked, is a significant figure in *kāvya* generally. J. J. Meyer, treating of the epics, remarks,

> If the woman is in love, and anyhow, believes herself loved, then in Old India, as is well known, she usually goes herself to the house of her loved one for her purpose.[50]

The lucky man does not need to leave his bed.[51] Tamil poetry describes lovers' rendezvous, but both parties have to leave their beds, or the man comes to the woman's house. This is a matter of different societies (and different poetries), but the North Indian must sometimes have had to go out for his love-making! It is, I believe, the total dominance of man in *kāvya*, and an attendant callousness, that led to this figure of the woman journeying alone and often in explicit discomfort[52] in the dark night to her lover being not merely the dominant but almost the only instance of illicit sex in *kāvya*.

A related theme is the female messenger (*dūtī*), who tells the man of her friend's great love for him. Ingalls, introducing the section of the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* which consists of such messages, remarks, 'Many of them are certainly messages from wives to absent husbands and from mistresses to the lovers with whom they have quarrelled.'[53] I doubt this. Not only does the form

[49] Ibid., 823 (trans. Ingalls):

> ... svādhīnām anukūlinīṃ svagṛhiṇīm āliṅgya yat supyate
> tat kiṃ prema gṛhāśramavratam idaṃ kaṣṭaṃ samārcyate//

[50] J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1953), p. 335.

[51] Meyer remarks, 'But alas! poor woman, and cunning man! If the woman comes herself into the house of her beloved, then he does not commit adultery (Nārada, xii, 60)!' Ibid.

[52] Cf. *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 826.

[53] Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 192.

strike me as artificial, it seems to me to be modelled on the bawd's approach to the client, as in the *Kuṭṭanīmata*. The world of *kāvya* is for the most part very pleasant, but fictitious.

Woman appears throughout the *Haravijaya*—in the description of Śiva's city, of the seasons, of the mountains; even in the battle scenes. Woman is inseparable from *kāvya*. The formalism of the *mahākāvya*, however, sets aside a special place for woman. In the *Haravijaya*, woman is enclosed in a particularly harmonious sequence of *sargas*. This sequence is what Keith calls the 'usual digression'[54] of *mahākāvya*, and De the 'banal topics'.[55]

In the *Haravijaya*, Śiva's followers and their women pick flowers (*sarga* 17), and bathe in the river (*sarga* 18). There is then a digression within the 'digression'—the sun sets (*sarga* 19), the moon rises (*sarga* 20), Śiva describes the moon-rise to Pārvatī and then the merging of his body with hers is described (*sarga* 21), and the ocean is described (*sarga* 22). Then back to the pleasure sequence, with the women adorning themselves prior to the arrival of their lovers (*sarga* 23). Some lovers come, but others do not, and *sarga* 24 is a description of lonely women's anguish—love in separation. *Sarga* 25 continues *sarga* 24: go-betweens are sent to the missing lovers to inform them of the sad plight of their mistresses. In *sarga* 26, the couples drink wine together, though it is only the women who get drunk; and *sarga* 27 describes, or rather alludes to, the ensuing copulation.

It is entirely misguided to see these *sargas* as adventitious padding. Mammaṭa at the very beginning of his *Kāvyaprakāśa* speaks of poetry as the creation of a world consisting solely of pleasure (*hlādaikamayī nirmiti*). These *sargas* are the heart of *kāvya*—the explicit creation of a world of pleasure. The pleasure *sargas* are indeed an interlude, a holiday from the 'plot'. All who know India know how general and strong a delight is taken there in holidaying, in festivals, excursions and picnics. It may well be supposed that this widespread aptitude for enjoyment found its apogee in court society: it would have been odd if it had not found expression in the poetry of the court.

One literary source for the pleasure trip as described by Ratnākara and other *mahākavis* is the *Harivaṃśa*, where several festive expeditions are described at length. But there is a great

[54] Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 133.
[55] De and Dasgupta, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 175.

difference between the epic and the court epic. The *Harivaṃśa* is full of vivid circumstantial detail, as in, for example, the Yādavas' trip to the seaside (Piṇḍāraka Tīrtha) with thousands of courtesans. They sport in the water, Balarāma already drunk. Some of the women float, holding on to boats, others imitate birds and fishes. The courtesans also dance and sing, but Kṛṣṇa further improves the occasion by summoning *apsaras*, who dance, sing, make music, and put on plays. The fortunate Yādavas play with these *apsaras*, taking to boats to do so. Pitchers of wine float in the water. Wearing funny clothes and flowers, the Yādavas sing and strike the water with their hands. The courtesans croak like frogs. Leaving the water at last, all smear their bodies with unguents, and proceed to the drinking booths, where they eat and drink to their heart's content. All sorts of good things to eat are described. After further dances, they go back home. But in *mahākāvya* inessentials are stripped away. There are no boats, no funny clothes, no animal imitations. Even food is dispensed with.[56] *Mahakāvya* takes merry-making very seriously.

The pleasure sequence in the *Haravijaya* begins with *sarga* 17. At the sounding of the midday conch Siva's followers, merry-hearted, go forth with beautiful women to gather flowers from the trees on Mount Mandara (17.1). This happiness abruptly follows the furious scenes of debate. Perhaps the *gaṇas* are, by implication, rejoicing at the temporary resolution of the difficulties so very recently come to their notice. But on Mount Mandara, where 'all seasons are in season'[57] and 'everything gladdens the heart',[58] happiness is the rule, as the long *sarga* 5 makes plain.

For a considerable number of verses the poem has been enclosed in the council-chamber, and *sarga* 17.2–6 now remind the reader that the scene is Mount Mandara. The mountain is not destroyed at doomsday; at the same time monkeys, who are intoxicated by the various juices they drink, rob the citron trees (17.2): the mountain is an everlasting paradise, yet a very natural place with thieving monkeys. These five verses

[56] In the *Naiṣadhacarita* Śrīharṣa gives a loving description of the marriage-banquet, but his *mahākāvya* does not follow the standard pattern.

[57] iha...sarvarturūpaḥ samayo (5.94).

[58] kim iva hi na hṛdayam...iha ratimad aviśad (5.147).

recapitulate the massive depiction of the mountain given in *sargas* 4 and 5. But once the scene is set, on the lofty mountain where elephants spray the sun with water (17.3), and foam from the sun's chariot-steeds waters the groves (17.5), the action proceeds on an ideal flatland. The mountainside (*taṭa*) is a plateau. As the poet gets into the swing of the pleasure trip the mountain shrinks in significance, and he compares it punningly to a lamp not quite extinguished in the early morning (17.37).

A third of the *sarga* is taken up by the walk to the wood. In describing the walk, feet make a good beginning:

> It was remarkable—
> the women's feet, as if watching
> their faces that surpassed the autumn moon in beauty,
> though ‹graceful of gait›/‹Buddhas›,
> manifested extreme ‹redness›/‹passion›.[59]

The soles of women's feet are painted red; the pun on *rāga*, '‹redness›/‹passion›', much used by Māgha and Bāna amongst others, is ready to hand. To create an apparent contradiction Ratnākara adds the pun on *sugata*, epithet of the Buddha, 'the well-gone one'. The reference to Buddha here is remarkably appropriate. Buddhist literature is full of detailed warnings against the snares and deceits of womankind. There is thus a special piquancy in this allusion to Buddhism at the very beginning of the pleasure section of the poem. The Buddha teaches the noble (and difficult) path to the end of suffering; this part of the poem describes the very easy path to the wood, the river, and on to the love-couch. In 17.106 the *sarga* as a whole is referred to as 'the act set in the wood, to which ‹the path of entry was very easy, being broad›'.[60]

The next two verses (17.8 and 9) speak of the women as Kāma's armies, punning, amongst other things, lovers and generals (*nāyaka*). In this connection of women and war the mood of the previous section is for the moment continued, before fading away.

[59] lāvaṇyaglapitaśaranniśākarāṇi śyāmānām iva paripaśyatāṃ mukhāni/
tac citraṃ sugatatayā yad anvitānāṃ pādānām aviralarāgatāvirāsīt//17.7//
There is significance here in the word for 'woman' (*śyāmā*, 'dark one'), in relation to the white of their faces and the red of their feet.

[60] viṣkambhasthitiviśadapraveśamārgān...kānanāṅkāt.

Several verses show the intimate connection between women and surrounding nature.

> The women's feet surpassed blooming lotuses,
> and as they went,
> the lotus-beds seemed to follow gladly in their steps
> in the guise of geese attracted
> by their tinkling anklets.[61]

Three kinds of movement are here combined: that of the women, and of geese, and also of lotuses, opening and slowly swaying. Seeing female *cakravāka* ducks kissing their mates, the women pretend to be wearied by their buttocks, and hang on their lovers' necks (17.13). Sandbanks in the river marked with prints of webbed feet remind the women of broad hips crested with the scratches of passionate lovers (17.20). At the end of the description of the walk, the close relationship between the women and their surroundings is well brought out by punning in this verse:

> The party of courtesans and the wood were splendid on the
> mountain:
> wearing
> ‹a lower garment woven of cotton›/
> ‹a mango tree covering its middle like a garment›,
> ‹joyful « in their speech»/‹fragrant›.
> beautiful
> with ‹ear-ornaments›/«giri-» *karṇikā* flowers›,
> and with ‹large necklaces›/‹varied *kaṭahāra* flowers›.[62]

During the walk nature sometimes takes an active role towards the women. A creeper momentarily embraces a woman's waist as she goes by, as if to measure it (17.19). A creeper clings to the hem of a woman's garment as if asking her and her lover to rest and dispel the fatigue of the journey (17.32). A red lotus rising from the lotus-pool is, with its yellow calyx, a hand of the sun offering a golden goblet (17.38).

Two verses greatly extend the sense of movement conveyed

[61] yāntīnāṃ vijitavinidrapaṅkajānāṃ pādānāṃ kumudavanāni saṃmadena/ mañjīrakvaṇitavikṛṣyamāṇahaṃsavyājenānugamam iva vyadhur vadhūnām//17.10//

[62] bibhrāṇaṃ vasanam ivāntarāpi cūtaṃ sāmodasthiti girikarṇikābhirāmam/ gāṇikyaṃ savikaṭahāratāṃ dadhat kṣmābhartus taṭam anu kānanaṃ ca reje// 17.36//

in the walk to the wood. In punning descriptions of the women's beauty, reference is made to Kubera ‹travelling in the Puṣpaka chariot› (17.25),[63] and to the ocean's tide ‹carrying off people on the shore› (17.30).[64] The aerial chariot enjoys celestial ease of motion, and thus is, by implication, analogous to the unimpeded walk to the wood. As for the ocean wave, its inevitable force is, I would suggest, that of the tide of human passion embodied in the walking women. The pleasure-trip has a momentum that sweeps people off their feet and carries them away. This section of the *sarga* concludes:

The young people,
going in a group along the path,
resting in a bower from time to time,
were friendly to each other without restraint.
Being at ease in what one does together
is the best thing about having a friend.[65]

This verse states an essential feature of the pleasure trip, as of pilgrimage, namely a new sense of community, a freedom from the constraints of everyday social structure. The journey to the wood is, moreover, a journey from one part of the poem to another. After the walk there is a note of increased tension within the *sarga*.

The woodland flowers attack the women and jeer at them:

Who can endure that one flower arrow?
How much less when varied and infinite?
Her heart pierced by them,
Love, his work done for him,

[63] puṣpakāñcī. Brahmā gave the Puṣpaka sky-chariot to Kubera; its real fame lies in the fact that the demon Rāvaṇa, having forcibly taken it from Kubera, used it to abduct Sītā, Rāma's wife.

[64] mārgasthaṃ...janaṃ harantyā.

[65] gacchantaḥ pathi ghaṭitā nikuñjadeśe
viśrāntāḥ kvacana parasparaṃ yuvānaḥ/
sauhārdaṃ vidadhur ayantraṇaṃ kriyāṇāṃ
viśrambhaḥ suhṛdi phalaṃ nanu pradhānam//17.39//

As the commentary points out, *yuvānaḥ* is intended to include men and women. There is a delicious irony, from the poet's point of view at least, in applying the word 'friend' to unfaithful lovers, and women bitterly jealous of each other; but this is to anticipate events.

did not again string his bow
against the proud woman.[66]

On the mountain
the flowering vernal white jasmine vines
and the blooming summer trumpet-flowers
seemed to exchange hearty laughter
as the nearby women
lost their pride and became bold.[67]

The women, however, get their revenge:

When the women's reddened fingertips,
superior to the blossoms,
violently plucked them,
it was tautology,
for they were ‹conquered›/‹plucked›
by the fingers' fresh shining beauty.[68]

Once the holiday-makers have reached their destination, the wood, and begin to pick flowers, the unrestrained friendship in which 17.39 rejoiced deteriorates into rivalry between the women. Reaching up for a flower, one woman gets instead a sweet fruit, for the display of her scratched arm-pit pains her rival (17.53). Another, bowed by the weight of her swelling breasts, yet desirous of reaching a high flower, is *uplifted*[69] when her lover shakes it down for her in the presence of her rival (17.55). A spray placed on a woman's ear by the lover in front of her rival is better adornment than the gold-ornament in the other ear (17.68). Another, offered a flower by her lover, is,

[66] eko'pi prasavaśaraḥ sa kena sahyo
nānātmā kim u gaṇanātigocaro yaḥ/
tadbhinne hṛdi caritārtha eva kāmo
māninyāṃ na punar abhūd adhijyacāpaḥ//17.46//

[67] vāsantyaḥ kusumabhṛtaś ca kundavallyo
graiṣmyaś ca pratigiri pāṭalāḥ praphullāḥ/
anyonyaṃ yuvatijanasya mānabhaṅga-
prāgalbhyaṃ vyatijahasustarām ivārāt//17.47//

[68] bibhrāṇair adhikaguṇatvam aṅganānāṃ
hastāgraiḥ prasabham akāri pallavānām/
pratyagrojjvalanijaśobhayā sarāgair
bhagnānām api punarukta eva bhaṅgaḥ//17.52//

[69] *samunnatā*: 'uplifted' is not quite accurate. The commentary says *garvitāpi*. She is '‹raised aloft›/‹conceited›'.

however, '‹unhappy›/‹did not get the flower›'[70] because he calls her by the wrong name (17.71). As if it were smoke, the dark-blue *tamāla* flower fastened on one woman's ear by the lover made her rival's eye water (17.74). Pollen blown out of a woman's eye by the lover definitely darkened both the eyes of her rival (17.87).

Another woman was anxious
about her dearest, hidden by a thick creeper.
An exceedingly jealous love
affects the hearts of women whose affections are genuine.[71]

Exceedingly jealous love (*atibahumatsaro 'naṅgaḥ*)—women in *kāvya* have good reason to be jealous, since they are faithful and men are unfaithful. The rivalry between women in which *kāvya* delights could be a true reflection of the condition of women. Harem life was clearly a breeding ground for jealousy.[72] The metaphor of the bee and the lotus is only too apt: the harem was a lotus-pool, the husband the bee going wherever he liked, and arousing jealousy wherever he did not go. The power and the reality of the jealousy underlying *kāvya* are demonstrated, I believe, by its manifestation not only between women but everywhere. The parts of the body are jealous of each other, the flowers are jealous of the women, the flowers are jealous of each other, the moon is jealous of women's faces. The list is endless. However, the origins of this jealousy are not to be found solely in the lot of women. Court society was similar to life in the harem in so far as there were many courtiers (and many poets) rivalling each other for the attention of one man (the king, prime minister, or whoever).

After picking flowers, the merry-makers fashion them into garlands. Although the women are 'skilled in the art of the various ways of making garlands'[73] (17.95), it is the men who do the work in the three verses that describe the making of garlands (17.90, 80, 111).

[70] asumanaskatāṃ prapede.

[71] nīrandhravratatitirohite'parasyāḥ
sāśaṅkaṃ dayitatame babhūva cetaḥ/
adhyāste hṛdayam akṛtrimapriyāṇāṃ
kāntānām atibahumatsaro hy anaṅgaḥ//17.75//

[72] Cf. the eloquent remarks of Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India*, pp. 47 ff.

[73] mālagrathanavikalpaśilpadakṣāḥ.

Having made up a garland
the man mistook her name as he gave it to her,
and, standing motionless
before his dejected mistress,
his face pale with embarrassment,
he looked like a straw scarecrow.[74]

It is unusual for the lover to be at a disadvantage. It also happens in 17.98, where again a lover gets the name wrong as he gives the garland, and the fair recipient ties him up with his present. But the scarecrow image shows the lover far more convincingly nonplussed than when participating in the game of being tied up. It is a benefit of writing within a well-defined network of conventions that such images as do intrude from elsewhere are especially vivid.

There is another verse in the *sarga* which shows observation of real life on Ratnākara's part, as distinct from observation of the hermetic network of poetic convention. The verse comes in the description of the walk to the wood, just after the women have likened the footmarks of little birds on the sandbanks to scratches on hips:

The women noticed on the path before them
the peculiar shape of a castor-oil plant.
Its leaves on very slender stems
were like the feet of a bird on its back,
claws outstretched
on long black legs.[75]

[74] ābadhya srajam abhidhāviparyayeṇa
śyāmāyā dadad ativaimanasyabhājaḥ/
vailakṣyāgamaparipāṇḍurānano'nyo
niḥspandasthitir akaroj jharaṅkaśaṅkām//17.90//

[75] uttānasthitivikarālakālajaṅgha-
vyākośāṅgulikhagapādanirviśeṣam/
saṃsthānaṃ tanutaranālapattram agre
nārībhiḥ pratipatham aikṣataurubūkam//17.21//

The castor-oil plant 'uruvūka, eraṇḍa' is also called 'pañcāṅgula'; in fact its leaves have seven or more lance-shaped pointed segments, but do strongly resemble hands. The young leaf is red and shining. The *Hitopadeśa* tells us that where there are no forest trees, even the 'eraṇḍa' counts as a tree. No doubt Ratnākara had in mind *Kāvyādarśa* 3.121:

na spṛśaty āyudhaṃ jātu na strīṇāṃ stanamaṇḍalam/
amanuṣya kasyāpi hasto'yaṃ na kilāphalam//

'Gandharvahasta' is yet another name for the plant.

This is a strange and somehow frightening verse. Immediately after the familiar and friendly topic of scratches and little birds, there is suddenly the apparition of a huge bird with gigantic claws (the leaf being eight inches across), lying on its back. This surreal verse is deeply significant. The women also are before long to cease their motion and lie on their backs beneath their lovers; they are also going to be scratched. Here can be sensed an underlying fear of the savagery of sex, a fear that magnifies the nails that scratch into great talons. The long straight legs signify erection, even though the bird stands for woman by common, and, it would seem, universal symbolism.[76]

When at last they leave the wood, the women are covered with flowers:

> The lotus-eyed women,
> with all sorts of blooming flowers
> on their heads, their breasts, their curved necks,
> and on their girdle-strings,
> shone like flower-weaponed Kāma's
> armoury
> fashioned by Spring.[77]

The women are wearied by their exertions, and perspire freely. The sweat washes the cosmetic paintings off their cheeks, though a creeper with its pollen redoes the painting (17.103). Another woman sheds drops of sweat as the *śephāli* sheds its flowers when struck by the wind (17.100). Drops of sweat are the heavenly bodies around their face-moons (17.113). The *sarga* draws naturally to its close, and leads on to the next, the bathing scene.

This sketch of the *sarga* leaves at least three important elements as yet unnoticed. To begin with, there are several references to the arts. Various arts are mentioned in passing throughout the poem; I have already mentioned the references made during the description of Indra's city as beheld by the envoy. Dancing is mentioned (17.51, 76, 79, 96). The women's voices are compared to music (17.81), and the tasteful arrangement of a woman's

[76] According to Rodney Needham (in a series of lectures given in Oxford in 1964).

[77] uttaṃsabhāgakucabandhurakaṃdharāgra-
kāñcīguṇāspadavicitravinidrapuṣpāḥ/
rejuḥ kuśeśayadṛśaḥ kusumāyudhasya
sugrīṣmakeṇa racitā iva hetiśālāḥ//17.112//

dress to a song (17.89). The allusions to dramaturgy are particularly interesting, for they provide a sense of structure within the *sarga*. During the walk to the wood, the *kokil*[78] actor behind the stage-curtain of a thicket sings the prologue to the drama of early spring (*navamadhumāsanāṭaka*) (17.35). The flower-picking trip is a drama itself:

> Having performed their role
> and danced for Love the dancing-master,
> at the end of the drama of the dallying among flowers
> the lotus-eyed women, repositories of love,
> then left the act set in the wood
> to which ‹the entrance was easy, being broad›/
> ‹the course of the introductory scene
> had been as clear
> as an explanatory scene›.[79]

Since *sarga* 17 is at the beginning of a major new section of the poem, it is possible that Ratnākara was at this juncture especially conscious of the shaping of his poem, and that this awareness found expression in technical reference to the forms of drama. Here is another verse using a technical term:

> As she sweated
> a fawn-eyed woman who had wandered into the mountain
> wood put on a show for her lover:
> on her jutting breasts
> ‹the marks›/‹the acts›
> of nails were resplendent,
> ‹spotted with the clinging droplets›
> ‹wonderful because including
> the development of the plot›.[80]

Bindu, 'drop', as the technical term 'development of the plot', signifies that the course of a drama, which had seemed

[78] The Indian cuckoo.

[79] pātratvaṃ manasijalāsakasya yātā
nartitvā kusumavihāranāṭakānte/
viṣkambhasthitiviśadapraveśamārgān
nirjagmuḥ kamaladṛśo'tha kānanāṅkāt//17.106//

[80] bhrāntāyā giritaṭakānane mṛgākṣyāḥ
prekṣyatvaṃ dayitatamasya jagmivāṃsaḥ/
svidyantyā babhur avalagnabinducitrāḥ
prottuṅgastanataṭavartino nakhāṅkāḥ//17.102//

interrupted, begins again to progress in the same way as a drop of oil spreads out over the surface of water. According to the general view of *mahākāvya*, this *sarga*, and the others of the pleasure sequence, are an interruption of the plot of the *mahākāvya*. Yet, the woman's sweat is itself part of the smooth development of this part of the poem: that the women have sweated leads them to bathe, and on inevitably to copulation where drops of semen will be shed. *Bindu* also has a Śaivite significance—it is the energy of Śiva which has gathered itself together before spreading out to create the diversity of the phenomenal universe. Here too is sexuality: the *bindu* is the 'round lump formed by the union of Śiva and Śakti'.[81] Bearing this in mind, the present verse foreshadows the merging of Śiva and Pārvatī a few verses later:

> When the women with their lovers
> had gone deep into the woodland
> it came to pass that they saw from afar
> the river of the gods
> like the joint body
> of Śiva the Trident-bearer
> and Pārvatī, Daughter of the Mountain,
> delightful
> ‹with its pleasing sandbanks›/
> ‹in the unison of their emotion of pleasure›.[82]

The origins of drama would seem to lie in ritual; another aspect of the flower-picking *sarga* is its connection with fertility ritual. The beautiful, voluptuous woman of art is certainly a fertility symbol. Ritual elements may be discerned in the many festivals in ancient India which were linked to particular seasons and particular plants. Ratnākara refers to one such festival.

> The festival of the fresh creeper,
> being ‹vehemently›/‹eagerly› performed
> by the roaming young men and the bees,

[81] *Kāmakalāvilāsa* 5: śivaśaktimithunapiṇḍa (cited by André Padoux, *Recherches sur la symbolique et l'énergie de la parole dans certains textes tantriques* (Paris, 1963), p. 94).

[82] preyobhiḥ samam avagāhya kānanorvīṃ
dehārdhasthitir iva śūliśailaputryoḥ/
rāmābhir na rucirasaikatābhirāmā
nāloki tridaśataraṅgiṇī vidūrāt//17.109//

merry-hearted in their addiction
to drinking the thick honey-wine,
was thoroughly approved of by the women.[83]

Navalatotsava is a specific spring festival. Alaka quotes the following anonymous verse in his gloss:

When in spring a maiden
like a creeper a tree,
of her own accord embraces a lover,
that is the festival of the fresh creeper.[84]

Raghavan remarks, 'according to [17.93] and the commentary thereon by Alaka, the chief feature of Navalatikā is the voluntary embraces which ladies offer to their lovers.'[85] But there is nothing of this in the poem itself. Raghavan quotes other, different definitions of this festival, all assigning an active role to women.[86] Ratnākara, on the contrary, makes the men active in the festival. He deliberately turns his back on what people actually do. Seeking to be universal, *kāvya* avoids vulgar details.

The act of swinging, an important part of spring festivals, popular in literature and art,[87] is not allowed to enliven the woodland sports. On account of the need for contrast and surprise, it is in quite other contexts that the swing is mentioned: the *gaṇa* Vahnigarbha was

wearing a shining pearl-necklace
with a gleaming ‹centre-piece›/‹seat›
of ruby cunningly fastened,
a swing to swing on
made by a dryad
whose long arms hid the sky.[88]

[83] bhrāmyadbhir ghanamakarandaśīdhupāna-
vyāsaṅgapramuditamānasais tadānīm/
saṃrambhād aliyuvabhir vitanyamāno
na strībhir na navalatotsavaḥ śaśaṃse//17.93//

[84] yatrābhinavayā vadhvā latayeva madhau drumaḥ/
svayam āliṅgyate kāntaḥ sa syān navalatotsavaḥ//

[85] *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāra Prakāśa*, pp. 653 ff.

[86] Ibid.

[87] See Jeannine Auboyer, *La vie publique et privée dans l'Inde ancienne*, fascicule VI, *Les jeux et les jouets* (Paris, 1955), pp. 27–38.

[88] suśliṣṭamadhyaghaṭitāspadapadmarāga-
pīṭhojjvalām amalahāralatāṃ dadhānaḥ/
āndolanāya racitāṃ sthagitāntarikṣa-
vistāribāhuvanadevatayeva dolām//10.9//

In the description of the ocean:

> A long wave was marvellously
> like a swing
> set up on the ocean by the mermaids,
> the complete reflection of the moon's disc
> rising up in its centre,
> a gleaming seat
> made of a huge jewel.[89]

What the poet excludes in one place slips in at another.

Kāvya has its own version of fertility in plants: particular trees have specific pregnancy longings, longings which involve women.[90] Thus an *aśoka* tree suddenly blooms when kicked by a woman (17.31), and the *bakula* tree (*Mimusops Elengi*) is in bloom because it has been sprinkled with wine from women's mouths (17.40). But references to drama in this *sarga* outnumber explicit mentions of fertility: art is more important than nature.

Finally, in this *sarga* a particular figure of speech is introduced to the poem—the corroborative statement (*arthāntaranyāsa*). Here the second half of the verse is a maxim relevant to the particular happening described in the first half The *gaṇas* made prolific use of maxims, but not as a comment within a verse on the rest of the verse. In this and other *sargas* of the pleasure sequence, the maxim is the poet's glib comment on the women's antics: of the 114 verses of the *sarga*, twenty-seven conclude in this way. The maxims, or general statements, fall into two categories: statements about the nature of love, and statements about getting on in the world. The poet manifests his superiority to his creation by standing back from it. Here is an example of the second category: after a secret copulation a woman's tears of joy wash away the decorative paintings on her cheeks—the poet remarks, 'No one could have anything in the world worse than ‹water›/‹stupidity›.'[91] In this case, as in six others, a pun eases the transition from the particular to the general; water is inconvenient in this instance, stupidity is always bad. At the same time, the woman is embarrassed by her manifestation of

[89] madhyādhirūḍhasakalapratimāgatendu-
bimbasphuradvikaṭaratnaviṭaṅkapīṭhā/
adhyamburāśi racitā jaladevatābhir
doleva rājatitarāṃ sma taraṅgalekhā//22.9//

[90] This convention is discussed below, pp. 280 ff.

[91] aśreyo jagati bhavej jaḍān na keṣām//17.82//

pleasure: the poet enjoys her discomfiture; the poet certainly is not stupid, nor is his audience, we are to understand. Often a saying applicable to political advancement is applied. The women's ear-ornaments fall off as they reach for high flowers: 'It is not surprising that one who has risen falls down.'[92] The bees follow the fragrant breeze from the wood until they smell the women's breath: 'Who does not abandon his first place to get a better one?'[93] The lotuses, surpassed in every way by the women's faces, were avoided by the bees: 'People skilled in noticing differences are not deceived by others.'[94] There is also a piquancy in the statements about the nature of love; banal in themselves, they are slightly at odds with the situation they are applied to. With various expedients a man thwarts a woman reaching for a flower, because he wishes to give it to her himself: 'Ah, love wishes to do favours!'[95]

So much for *sarga* 17. The six remaining *sargas* of the pleasure sequence must be reviewed more briefly. The outdoor sports continue in *sarga* 18 with water frolics (*jalakrīḍā*). There is then a hiatus formed by the inner core of the poem, *sargas* 19–22. The pleasure sequence is resumed in *sarga* 23, with an account of the women's toilet after they have returned indoors. In *sargas* 24 and 25 the condition of love in separation (*vipralambaśṛṅgāra*) is described; in *sarga* 25 in the words of the go-between (*dūtī*) informing the lover of the lamentable condition of his mistress. *Sarga* 26, which describes the drinking of wine, takes place in a drinking hall (*āpānabhūmi*, 26.2); the sexual enjoyment (*sambhoga*) which is the subject of *sarga* 27 probably happens there also.

Sarga 18 begins with a description of the walk to the river, as did the previous *sarga* with a walk to the wood; again both transition and progress are emphasised. The women are now carrying sunshades (18.2, 3, 4, 5), which suggests how hot it is. Of the sun's heat there is mention only in the first verse. Their white sunshades are compared to the moon, and so are their faces. Thus a strong note of coolness is struck before they even reach the water. The river with its golden lotuses and its geese is briefly described (18.15–20), then follows the entry into the

[92] ārūḍho vinipatatīti nātra citram//17.86//
[93] ko nādyaṃ tyajati padaṃ viśeṣalābhāt//17.34//
[94] vañcyante na khalu parair viśeṣaniṣṭhāḥ//17.94//
[95] premāho racayitum īhate'nukūlam//17.67//

water (18.21–26). For the remainder of the *sarga* the nominal topic is *jalakrīḍā*, but in fact there is little actual play. The women spray each other with water squirted from syringes (18.27, 31, 45, 50, 62, 69, 74, 87); they beat the water with their hands (18, 28, 93); and they throw foam at each other (18.63). The women's flopping breasts make waves (18.32, 49, 52, 94). One lover strikes a woman with a lotus stalk (71), another makes his mistress a garland of lotuses (18.72). More enterprising is the lover who dives and embraces a woman beneath the water (18.33). Only one more instance of water-frolics remains to be mentioned, one indicative of the poet's lack of any real interest in play:

A woman,
warding off with her hands
the swarms of bees wishing to fly up to her
because of the fragrance of her breath,
her eyes rolling,
seemed
to want to start throwing a ball,
eager for sport.[96]

The standard content if *kāvya*, here the bees, is more real to the poet than the all too frivolous activity of throwing balls. Playing with balls was a favourite pastime, often mentioned in literature; but no balls are thrown here.

While the women are in the river, the lotuses they wear in their ears fall into the water (18.36, 38, 39, 65, 76); as do their ear-rings (18.79, 81), their pearl necklaces (18.46, 64), and a jewelled bracelet (18.47). The collyrium is washed off their eyes (18.53, 67, 98), so too the lac from their feet (18.56), and the sandalpaste from their bodies (18.80);

As if saying,
'Assuredly natural beauty is best.
Just think,
what use are these?'
the water took the lac from their lips,
the collyrium from their eyes,
and the sandalwood from their breasts.[97]

[96] niḥśvāsānāṃ saurabhād āpatiṣṇūn rolambaughān vārayantī karāgraiḥ/
vyālolākṣī kācid āripsateva krīḍālolā kandukakṣepavṛttim//18.70//
kanduka may mean a 'yo-yo': see Ingalls, *Anthology*, note to verse 517, pp. 505 ff.

[97] bhūtārthaiva śreyasī nanv abhikhyā ko'rtho'mībhiś cintayetīva tāsām/
oṣṭhād akṣnor yāvakaṃ kajjalaughaṃ toyaṃ ninye candanaṃ ca stanāgrāt//18.75//

It is worthy of note that only in the final verse of the *sarga*, where it is said that the women put on white clothes, is there any indication that they took off their clothes to bathe. This is because their lovers' removal of their lower garments forms the climax of these *sargas*; any earlier mention of stripping would be an anti-climax.

At length the women wring out their hair with both hands (18.98), and clamber out of the water up the slippery jewelled steps (18.100);

> Having risen in succession from the celestial river
> whose serried waves were still agitated
> from collision with the expanse of their buttocks,
> the women,
> as soon as they reached the bank of jewel-dust,
> then put on their white garments,
> and shone like the beautiful days of autumn
> that are dressed in banks of white clouds.[98]

This summary of the *sarga* presents only what might be called the story-line. Among much else, it is fascinating to note the engaging character attributed to the river-water, which in so far as it is masculine in its suppositious character, evinces far more interest in the women than do the men. As a woman dallies on the bank, she is splashed by the water, which in its impatience for the beauty of her limbs, has jumped up to embrace her with passion (18.20). The water with its darting fish-eyes looks with interest at the women's movements (18.30). Drinking too deeply of the nectar of the women's liquid beauty, the waves have to spew it forth in the guise of foam (18.50). The water takes the women's ear-lotuses with its wave-hands, overbold through familiarity, and spreads a laugh of foam at its fun (18.39). When the waves had got right into the women's navels, and made their breasts flop, they went up on to the bank, as if in an excess of self-satisfaction (18.52). On the other hand the water is feminine in so far as it is jealous of the women's girdles sounding better than its geese (18.24). And in maternal affection for an

[98] jaghanaphalakāsphālakṣubhyattaraṅgatateḥ kramāt
tridaśasarito ratnakṣodasthalīpulināśrayāḥ/
nyavasata sitāny uttīryātha striyo vasanāni tā
jaladharakulānīva svacchāḥ śaraddivasaśriyaḥ//18.101//

ear-lotus surpassed by the woman's eye, the water snatches it back with its wave-hands (18.38).

The *sarga* is many things, as is every *sarga*. It is, for instance, a tone-poem in white. I have already referred to the white sunshades. The white foam of the river fascinates the poet (18.29, 34, 42, 45, 50, 62, 69, 74.87). The superabundance of foam is that of a bubble-bath rather than of a river. Here is another instance, like the whiteness attributed so fulsomely to the human smile, of the stereotyped attribution of colour, especially whiteness, that is such a feature of *kāvya*. There are white lotuses in the water; and women's faces are pale:

> A white night-lotus,
> burst open by the billowing waves,
> opened wide its mouth, as it were,
> zealously to drink
> the stream of beauty's nectar
> falling from a woman's face-moon.[99]

However, the brightness and purity that *kāvya* strives for, is, as *kāvya* is only too aware, unobtainable. This dichotomy is expressed in, for example, the word *chāyā*, which means both 'lustre' and also 'shadow', as in the first verse of the *sarga*·

> The radiance of the sun,
> making their limbs weary,
> was then broken up by the women as they went,
> as if angry with it,
> casting the ‹lustre›/‹shadow›
> of their eyes that resembled blue lotuses.[100]

For Indian poets moonlight is much pleasanter than sunlight, only reasonable given the fierceness of the latter. But it is unusual for the sun to be attacked, to be 'broken up'; it is the moon that is vulnerable, whether through the stain of the hare-mark, the Indian equivalent of our Man-in-the-moon, which spoils its clear beauty; or through its tendency to be eclipsed, mythologically expressed as being swallowed by the demon Rāhu:

[99] sīmantinyā niṣpatantīm mukhendoḥ pātuṃ lāvaṇyāmṛtasyeva vṛṣṭim/
nirbhinnaṃ sat kairavaṃ vīcibhaṅgair vyādād ārād ādarād ānanāgram//18.77//

[100] kurvann aṅgaklāntim arkaprakāśo gacchantībhir manyunevāṅganābhiḥ/
phullannīlāmbhojasaṃvādinetracchāyāpātaiḥ khaṇḍaśo'tha vyadhāyi//18.1//

As the circles of shadow
from the *apsaras*' sunshades
became wider,
they covered the earth like so many Rāhus
descended in greedy desire
to swallow their face-moons.[101]

It is the moon that Rāhu swallows, thus the women's faces are in no real danger, and are superior to the moon:

A woman's lustrous face-moon,
of undiminished beauty even in the day,
its form inaccessible to Rāhu,
not imparting the disease of sleep to the day-lotuses,
shone,
a novel moon indeed.[102]

Nevertheless, the perfection of women is not perfect. In later *sargas* we hear much about the leaf-shaped paintings in agallochum or musk on women's cheeks that, like the spot on the moon, stain their shining purity. Although purity is the culminating note—with the women's putting on shining white clothes—jealousy and offended pride, as in *sarga* 17, again blacken the white of woman's serenity. As in the previous *sarga*, the vein of jealousy manifests itself not in the walk, but when the action proper begins, that is, as they enter the water. A woman, frightened as she descends to the water down the jewelled steps up which rise the restless waves, tightly squeezes her lover's hand and her rival's heart (18.25). Outwardly smiling, one woman washes off from her lover's body another woman's cosmetic (18.27). Since the lover called a woman by her rival's name as he sprayed her with water, she was burnt; the other, hearing her name, was ‹blissful›/‹cooled›[103] though she was not moistened (18.31). The lover diving beneath the water, mentioned earlier as the most striking instance of what might be expected to be 'water-play', is just one more means of portraying jealousy:

[101] baṃhīyastvaṃ nākanārījanasya chattracchāyāmaṇḍalair īyivadbhiḥ/
tadvaktrendugrāsagardhāvatīrṇair ākārṇorvī saiṃhikeyair ivāsīt//18.5//

[102] chāyāṃ bibhrad vāsare 'py akṣataśrīś chātodaryā gamyarūpo na rāhoḥ/
nidrātaṅkaṃ paṅkajānām akurvan vyadyotiṣṭāpūrva evānanenduḥ//18.66//

[103] śāntiṃ bheje.

Because her lover diving
and swimming underwater
embraced a woman,
smiling-faced
while her rival looked on disagreeably in fury,
she considered that
the result of the water's ‹favour›/‹clarity›.[104]

Nail-wounds revealed on a woman's breasts when the unguent was washed from them were burning the eyes of her rival; when the foam covered them up again, she was annoyed (18.69). Another, when her rival was struck with lotus stalks by the lover, was red with rage and suffered though not hit (18.71). A garland of golden lotuses given by the lover to one woman, flashing like a flame, made the fire of humiliation burn in her rival's eye (18.72).

Clearly, for many of those concerned, frolicking in the water is not a happy occasion. And this jealousy among the women is reinforced by jealousy attributed to the non-human world. The white lustre of the women's cheeks derides the white geese (18.10). The river, seeing its geese surpassed in gait by the women, is supposed, as its waves touch the bank, to have lost its regard for the birds and to be throwing them away (18.18). The women's eyes and the river's blooming blue-lotuses laugh at each other in rivalry (18.61). One blue-lotus, surpassed by the lustre of the women's eyes and greatly shamed, wishes to quit their sight as it quivers on a wave (18.86).

Two instances of attributed jealousy state starkly the pettinesses of jealousy:

The water,
the beauty of its lotuses
surpassed by the lustre of the women's faces,
as if in anger,
washed off with its waves
the collyrium from their eyes.
Even a very small injury to a foe gives pleasure.[105]

. . .

[104] maṅktvā preyān īyivān ambhaso 'ntar yat paśyantyāṃ roṣarūkṣaṃ sapatnyām/
āśiśleṣa smeravaktrāṃ stryaṃ tat sāphalyaṃ sā tatprasādasya mene//18.33//
Or, '‹the water's clarity›/‹the lover's favour›'.

[105] vaktracchāyānirjitāmbhojaśobhaṃ roṣeṇeva strījanasyekṣaṇāni/
ambhaś cakre vīcidhautāñjanāni svalpaḥ prītyai viprakāro 'py arātau//18.6//

Seeing fall
an excellent blooming blue-lotus
that had been made into a woman's ear-ornament
a lotus shook on a wave,
as if performing a dance of satisfaction
at the thought,
'How wonderful this misfortune didn't happen to me.'[106]

There is here a wry humour, wry because of the unpalatable nature of the truth expressed. From the perspective of court society, however, the truth that injury to one's foe gives one pleasure is perhaps more obvious and less subject to moral disapproval.

The jealousy that is so prominent in *sargas* 17 and 18 diminishes during the remainder of the pleasure sequence. The beginning of *sarga* 23 sets a new mood, speaking of the women's graciousness: the moonbeams reflected in their toe-nails are supposed to be their embodied graciousness (23.2). There is only a subdued jealousy in the waists' dolefully contrasting their lack of adornment with the splendid state of breasts and hips (23.8). There is some anger displayed when sinful lovers arrive (23.55–58), but no mention of the favoured rivals. The only other instance of jealousy in this *sarga* is an attribution of spiritual pride to an eye, an attribution that is more amusing than most in that it is the more outrageous:

As if angrily thinking,
'This blue-lotus,
‹in its connections with water›/
‹in its meetings with fools›,
disregarding
‹the true state of itself and of others›/
‹the essence of the supreme spirit›,
dares to deprive my beauty of excellence!'
the long-eyed woman's eye
thus besieged the dwelling place, its own,
of the blue-lotus in her ear.[107]

[106] vīkṣya bhraṣṭaṃ karṇapūrīkṛtaṃ sal līlāvatyāḥ phullanīlāravindam/
citraṃ yan me nāpad eṣeti toṣān nṛttārambhīvābjam ūrmau cakampe//18.76//

[107] kāntiprakarṣam anapekṣya parātmatattvaṃ
hartuṃ pragalbhata idaṃ jalasaṃgameṣu/
itthaṃ ruṣeva rurudhe nijasaṃniveśa-
bhūmir dṛśāyatadṛśaḥ śravaṇotpalasya//23.32//

In *sarga* 24 there is no mention of rivals; we hear rather of a woman, unhappy in separation, being comforted by her kindly friends (24.29). The conclusion of the *sarga* explicitly states this absence of jealousy:

> Thus in the evening,
> when the ocean was raised by the rise of the moon,
> the women were distraught.
> They were separated—
> that distressful condition
> where jealous anger is banished
> by the growing and primary passion for the lover.[108]

Sarga 25 has one slight mention of jealousy: the lotus-fibre placed on a woman tormented by loneliness severely burns her body as if through jealousy of it—both the lotus-fibre and the woman's body being slender (25.5). The go-between tells the lover to disregard his mistress' jealous anger (25.33). There is a notable lack of attributed jealousy in this verse that comes towards the end of the *sarga*:

> As if thinking,
> 'Alas, let not the slender waist
> be deprived of the lover's touch
> on account of our prominence!'
> the woman's breasts,
> made into circles by his embrace,
> at once flattened themselves.[109]

In *sarga* 26 there are several occasions when lovers get their mistresses' names wrong, but such errors are appropriate to the state of intoxication, and there is no mention of the rival women's satisfaction at being named. In *sarga* 27 the only jealousy is a lower lip throbbing as if in envy of the eye being kissed (27.24). Thus, jealousy comes into fierce prominence in *sargas* 17 and 18 and then proceeds to fade away. To some extent the jealousy

[108] ittham visamsthuladaśāḥ sudṛśo babhūvur
indūdayollasitaratnanidhau pradoṣe/
ujjṛmbhamāṇaramaṇaprathamānurāga-
mānapravāsavidhurasthitivipralambhāḥ//24.50//

[109] madhyasya tānavabhṛto dayitād alabdha-
sparśatvam unnativaśād bata māvayor bhūt/
cakrīkṛtau tadupagūhavaśād itīva
tanvyāḥ stanau sapadi vāmanatām adhattām//25.69//

thus depicted among the women is the counterpart of the wrath of the *gaṇas*, who are themselves jealous of their honour.

In the interval between *sarga* 18 and *sarga* 23 the men have been somehow separated from the women. *Sarga* 23 begins by stating that the arrival of the women's lovers is imminent, and they are intent on their manner of adornment. Commencing with the toes, the *sarga* works up the body to the hair, and then describes the women's beauty in general terms.

Feet are painted red with lac (23.4); girdles are put on, or fall off (23.5–8); their necklaces are beautiful (23.9–12); lips are painted (23.15–18); patterns are drawn on cheeks with musk or aloe paste (23.19–28); ear-ornaments are described (23.30–1); collyrium is applied to eye and eyebrow (23.32–4); the *tilaka* spot of musk is applied to their foreheads (23.35); their hair is adorned with jewels and chaplets (23.36–9). Cosmetic pastes are applied to their bodies (23.40–3); and the general beauty of their adorned state described (23.44–6).

One verse is an adverse comment on this ornamentation:

> The moon,
> reflected in the bright cheek
> of a beautiful-browed woman,
> seemed to laugh with its beams
> at the thought that, lotus-eyed,
> she had put on hundreds of ornaments in vain:
> she had just muddied the lustre of her body.[110]

It was in a similar vein that the river had declared that natural beauty was best as it washed off all the women's cosmetics (18.75). But it must be understood that such advocacy of natural simplicity was certainly a bolder contention in the poet's time than in our own day. Note, for instance, that the women take off their clothes when they bathe in *sarga* 18, but not their ornaments. Ornamentation, of things and buildings as well as people, was basic to Indian civilization. In the words

[110] vinyasya bhūṣaṇaśatāni mudhaiva deha-
kāntiḥ kuśeśayadṛśā kaluṣīkṛteyam/
cārubhruvaḥ pratimito 'cchakapolabhitti-
bhāge gabhastibir itīva jahāsa candraḥ//23.42//

The whiteness of teeth means that laughter by convention is white; moonbeams are also white, and thus may easily be supposed to be laughter.

of Heinrich Zimmer, 'The Indian idea is that only things covered with ornaments are beautiful.'[111] This general statement applies to *kāvya* as well as much else. The common view was that *kāvya* is adorned with figures of speech, the word for which, *alaṃkāra*, means also 'ornament'. Just as a girl, though beautiful, does not shine without ornaments, so too poetry without figures of speech.[112]

Like *kāvya*, jewellery is an instance of the art and skill of men attempting to render permanent the impermanent beauty in the world they see around them. In particular, it is the transient and fragile beauty of flowers that the forms of ornaments sought to reproduce:

> the very names of articles of jewellery in all Indian tongues clearly prove the most part of them to be imitations of the splendid blossoms and creepers which the flora of this lovely land holds out to man for his adornment on festive occasions.[113]

But ornaments themselves are only too impermanent. In poetry they are made to be in some sense responsive to human emotions. This may happen in a straightforward manner, as when the angry *gaṇas* break up their ornaments in their extreme agitation, or in the parallel frenzy of love-making (Mandara's caves are full of jewels from ornaments shattered during copulation, 17.4). Women's bodies generally are too much for their ornaments: the women's necklaces fall off when they reach for the high flowers and the poet comments, 'There is never connexion for long between ‹the ill-behaved›/‹prominent [breasts]› and ‹the virtuous›/‹stringed [necklaces]›' (17.78).[114] All this is only to be expected; but often a more intimate relation is imagined to exist between the ornament and its wearer. For example:

[111] *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. I, p. 236.

[112] See, for example, Bhāmaha, *Kāvyālaṃkāra* I, 13; III, 57; and Vāgbhaṭa, *Vāgbhaṭālaṃkāra* IV, 1. Bhaṭṭa Tauṭa, one of the teachers of the great Abhinavagupta, wishing to emphasise the unimportance of *alaṃkāras* in poetry and to promote *rasa*, remarked that bracelets and necklaces were not essential to men, whereas bravery and generosity were: 'śauryaudāryādivat puṃsāṃ na hi. hārāṅgadādayaḥ, antaraṅgatarībhāvaṃ gantuṃ jātucid īśate.' Quoted by Śrīdhara in his commentary on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, ed. Sivaprasad Bhattacharyya (Calcutta, 1959), Vol. 2, p. 271. It is noteworthy that Bhaṭṭa Tauṭa speaks of ornaments on men, rather than on women, the comparison used by those in favour of *alaṃkāras*. For women, ornaments were not an extraneous luxury.

[113] Albert Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India* (revised and enlarged by Jas. Burgess) reprinted New Delhi, 1972, p. 51.

[114] nodvṛttaiḥ saha guṇināṃ cirāya yogaḥ//

As one woman,
angrily shaking off her attendant lover
whose fault was manifest,
went on ahead,
her girdle, because of the looseness of its fastening,
immediately falling at her feet
like a friend impeded her.[115]

Girdles have a strong tendency to drop off of their own accord, as is noted at the beginning of the women's toilet:

'Lady! you really must be ‹fastened›/‹restrained›
on the woman's buttocks.
Your ‹release›/‹final bliss›
will come in copulation.
Don't be noisy,
there's no point in ‹jangling›/‹crying out›!'
thus the anklet seemed to address the tinkling girdle.[116]

In the very next verse, a girdle has fallen:

One woman standing in the middle of her girdle
which bristling with gold and silver
had fallen
to the toes of her lotus feet
on account of its loose fastening
was for a moment as beautiful as if
she were Love's city
provided with a curved rampart of gold.[117]

Here the girdle is seen as a protecting wall around the woman—perhaps a hint of the magical function of ornaments: 'all had a symbolic significance and even a magical function, protecting from evil spirits and the harmful influence of certain planets.'[118]

[115] spaṣṭāgaskaṃ jīviteśaṃ vidhūya pratyāsannaṃ manyunāgre vrajantīm/
ālīvārād bandhaśaithilyahetoḥ kāñcī kāṃ cit pādapātiny arautsīt//18.11//

[116] baddhāstu nāma bhavatī vanitānitamba-
bimbe purā bhavati te rata eva mokṣaḥ/
mā bhūn mudhaiva mukharā virutair itīva
kāñcīm uvāca caraṇābharaṇaṃ raṇantīm//23.6//

[117] madhye sthitā śithilabandhanabhāgapāda-
padmāgrapātikaladhautakarālakāñcyāḥ/
śobhāṃ babhāra racitāñcitahemavapra-
cakrā kṣaṇaṃ kusumaketupurīva kā cit/-23.7//

[118] Auboyer, *La vie quotidienne*, p. 346.

On the basis mainly of Vedic texts, Gonda has revealed the more original meaning of the word *alaṃkāra*:

> 'making suitable, equal to, a match for, fitting a thing out in such a way that it answers to its purpose, etc.' Hence the word *alaṃkāra* is used many a time to denote magical objects that are to strengthen a person or thing, amulets and the like.[119]

Thanks to her ornaments, one woman is certainly thought to be well fitted out:

> There was one woman to be seen,
> the golden rings in her ears
> reflected on the surface of her prominent breasts,
> who had the splendid appearance
> of Love's oxcart on the move
> equipped with four large wheels.[120]

The women are Love's armoury (17.112); this woman is the supply waggon for his army, we are to suppose. The woman's earrings are her equipage. Gonda rightly questions whether when the term *alaṃkāra* was first used any distinction was made between its magico-religious and aesthetic aspects.[121] I would go further, and apply his remarks to a certain degree to the classical poetry, to *kāvya*. *Kāvya*, which avows itself to be ornamented, to be provided with *alaṃkāras*, is, I have suggested, a manifestation of the court society's wish to protect itself, to screen itself from unwanted realities. By being itself beautiful, *kāvya*, in some sense brought further beauty, further success. Ornamentation is useful. The woman with her earrings significantly appears to be a highly practical object.

Finally, it may be noted that the women's adornment of themselves is prefigured on a grander scale at the end of the description of sunset:

> All at once, without limitation,
> the cīrcle of the zodiac appeared,
> variegating with its shining forms

[119] J. Gonda, *Remarks on Similes in Sanskrit Literature* (Leiden, 1949), p. 1.

[120] ālokyatonnatapayodharapṛṣṭhabhāga-
bimbāgataśravaṇakāñcanakuṇḍalaikā/
sajjīkṛtaprakaṭacakracatuṣṭayāṅka-
saṃcāripuṣpaśarakambalivāhyakaśrīḥ//23.29//

[121] Gonda, *Similes in Sanskrit Literature*, p. 2.

the surface of the sky,
like fresh pieces of precious stones
scattered by the flying open
of the two halves of the casket-lid
the discs of the sun and the moon.[122]

The next verse in the *sarga* elaborates the correspondences between jewels and other beautiful objects:

The night put on
as a special ornament
its host of stars—
the throng of bright flowers in the forest of the night,
the mass of bubbles on the ocean of the sky,
the heap of pearls from the oyster-shell of the universe.[123]

Pearls, and jewels generally, resemble stars, flowers, bubbles; but only jewels are of practical use to man. By means of jewels man can, as it were, arrest the fleeting beauties of the world around him. The concluding verse of *sarga* 21, the central *sarga*, declares that Śiva's body joined with the jewel of the body of his beloved:[124] Pārvatī philosophically speaking is *prakṛti*, nature, the world. Thus the whole world is a jewel. Again, this joining of Śiva to the *dayitādeharatna* makes parallel to the fundamental metaphor for unity, man plus woman, the scarcely less basic metaphor of body plus ornaments.

It is in *sarga* 23 that Love's arrows are first mentioned within the pleasure-sequence. At the beginning of this *sarga*, as the women start to adorn themselves, they are said to be Love's arrows: the red toes on one foot are five aśoka-flower arrows (23.4); and hands are quivers in which the finger-nails are the flights of arrows (23.14). This attacking position on the woman's part may be seen as the poet's first flush of enthusiasm for the power their adornment gives them, but this does not last. Very

[122] tāvan nirargalam udaid amalātmamūrti-
kalmāṣitāmbaratalaṃ gṛhacakravālam/
sūryendumaṇḍalasamudgakavāṭakoṣa-
viśleṣakīrṇanavaratnakaṇāukāri//19.54//

[123] bhāsvanniśīthavanapuṣpakadambakena
nākāmburāśijalabudbudajālakena/
brahmāṇḍaśuktipuṭamauktikamaṇḍalena
bhūṣāṃ niśoḍunikareṇa parām adhāsīt//19.55//

[124] sthitavati dayitādeharatnena miśre/...vapuṣi puraripor (21.58).

soon they are made to be passive victims. Betel juice on the lower lip is a bloody wound from Love's swordblade (23.17);

> One woman, a beautiful mass of rays
> shining forth from her lips
> that surpassed the colour of *bimba* fruit,
> seemed to be spitting out
> the nectar accumulated from Love's flower-arrows
> that had penetrated deep within her.[125]

The saffron paste on a woman's body is pollen from the flower-arrow fired at her (23.41); bees encircling a woman on account of her fragrant unguent are thick armour against Love's irresistible arrow (23.43). It may be said that the arrows of Love are not taken very seriously in this *sarga*. Their effect is superficial. Even in the case of those arrows which are supposed to have got right into a woman, the apparent effect is only for her to spit forth nectar. All references are in terms of colour, rather than of pain: red arrows; bloody wound (and of course wounds are part of the pleasures of love); yellow arrow-pollen; black bee-armour. That the arrows and their effects are described in terms of colour follows naturally from the fact that the women are ornamenting themselves. But also the reference to armour is significant, I think. Are not the ornaments themselves to a limited degree armour against misfortune? And thus in this *sarga* the women are partly protected against the arrows of Love.

Sarga 24 depicts the condition of those unfortunate women whose lovers have not arrived, and Love's arrows now do hurt. The rays of the moon give pain to a woman as if they were arrows fired by Love (24.2);

> The wind from the flights of Love's arrows,
> fanning the fire of separation,
> quickly burnt the women's soft hearts.[126]

Love wounded their hearts with his arrows (24.12); for the woman whose heart was wounded by Love's arrows, the moon-

[125] bhāti sma kā cana tiraskṛtabimbakānti-
dantacchadonmiṣitadīdhitimaṇḍalaśrīḥ/
antaḥpraviṣṭabharasaṃbhṛtapuṣpabāṇa-
nārācagarbhamakarandam ivodgirantī//23.18//

[126] kusumeṣupṛṣatkapakṣajaḥ paridhunvan virahāśuśukṣaṇim/
adhṛtadraḍhimāni subhruvāṃ hṛdayāny āśu dadāha marutaḥ//24.4//

light cruelly became a mass of potash (24.18); there was no part of a woman's heart that was not pierced by Love's arrows (24.20). The last reference to Love's arrows in the *sarga* is surgical:

> The digit of the moon,
> reflected in a woman's clear cheek,
> was remarkable,
> being a pair of forceps placed there
> to draw out the barbs of Love's sharp arrows
> that had buried themselves in her heart.[127]

In the following *sarga*, where the description of lonely women is put into the mouths of go-betweens, the operation of Love's arrows is less clear-cut.

> 'Love, given his opportunity by you,
> pierces that woman's body
> with the sharp arrows that emaciate,
> but the wound, I believe, is terribly deep.'[128]

The woman's condition, the poet feels, is strange: in separation her heart is neither hard nor soft, since, when pierced by Love's arrows, it neither hardens against the lover, nor breaks (25.18). At the beginning of the *sarga*, she even takes the initiative against Love:

> 'Now, as if angry with him,
> she lets fly a shower of arrows at Love himself:
> her eyes, long as lotus petals,
> are reddened by sleeplessness.'[129]

And Love's arrows are shown to be ineffectual when they are punningly compared to moths entering the flame of a lamp

[127] tanvyāḥ śaśāṅkaśakalaṃ pratibimbitaṃ sad
acche kapolaphalake vidadhāra lakṣmīm/
cetonimagnaniśitasmarabāṇaśalya-
niṣkarṣaṇānihitakaṅkamukhāyamānam//24.48//

[128] tvayā'vilupatāvasaro natāṅgyāḥ śaraiḥ śarīraṃ kṛśatāṃ nayadbhiḥ/
bhinatti tasyā niśitair anaṅgaḥ kṣatis tu me cetasi gāḍhagurvī//25.11//
At first sight, the last *pada* should be translated, 'but the wound is in my heart, and it is terribly deep.' However, it is not likely that the suffering of the friend would exceed that of the woman in love.

[129] saṃpraty asau muñcati bāṇavarṣam ābaddhakopeva manobhave'pi/
prajāgareṇāruṇite bibharti vilocane padmapalāśadīrghe//25.8//
Women's glances are Love's arrows; she seems angry because angry eyes are also red.

(25.12).[130] An active response is also credited to the woman in this verse:

> 'She is drying up the flowers in the pavilion
> with the hot wind of her sighs,
> as if with the thought that
> it is these flowers Love makes into arrows
> and uses to break the hearts of lonely women.'[131]

At times the woman is virtually in harmony with the arrows: the wind raised by the arrows is supposed to send forth the woman's restless heart in search of her lover (25.32); and, more simply, to augment the long sighs that shook her breasts (25.48).

In the course of these three *sargas*, 23 to 25, there is thus a clear progression in the poet's treatment of Love's arrows. While the women adorn themselves, the effects of the arrows are only superficial (*sarga* 23). The arrows greatly pain lonely women (*sarga* 24); but when the go-betweens describe the condition of their unfortunate friends, the pangs of love have reached a further stage, at which the fire within the women is more grievous than any damage the arrows can do. Thereafter, Love's arrows cease to be a major theme. Early in *sarga* 26, a bee is supposed to say to Love, 'What can you do here? Abandon your bow!' (26.5):[132] the wine does Love's work for him.

Fire is another developing theme. The sequence of fire within the pleasure *sargas* begins in *sarga* 18. The women carry sunshades to keep off the heat of the sun. The jealousy that some suffer as they enter the water, is, as we have seen, mainly expressed in terms of burning (18.31, 69, 72). In *sarga* 23, there is mention of fire only in three verses. The dressing of the women's black hair produces a mass of smoke—from the burning of darkness by the rays of the moon (23.39); cosmetics harden quickly on the women's bodies which are heated by imagining the coming of the lovers (23.40); the patterns of black aloe paste on a woman's cheek are the ṣmoke of the fire of anger at an erring lover (23.55).

[130] The puns are *pakṣa* ‹feathers›/‹wings›, and *dagdhadaśā* ‹(the woman's] wretched state›/‹the burning wick›.

[131] śarīkṛtair ebhir ananyajanmā bhinatti cetāṃsi viyoginīnām/
itīva puṣpāṇy upakārabhūmau saṃśoṣayantīṃ śvasitoṣṇavātaiḥ//25.45//

[132] kiṃ kāryam atra ḅhavatā vijahīhi cāpam iti.

The hottest fire is that of love in separation, and the temperature is greatly raised during the next two *sargas*. From *sarga* 24 two verses must suffice as examples of the fire that burns in lonely women:

> The buzzing of bees on the prominent filaments
> of the blooming lotuses that formed her bed
> sounded like the crackling of her body
> in the fire of separation...[133]
>
> . . .
>
> Under the guise of tawny particles of pollen
> from the lotus couch battered by her sighs,
> one woman seemed as if the atoms of her yellow body
> were fleeing
> in fear of the fire of separation.[134]

The temperature rises. A piece of lotus fibre, placed on a woman's body to cool her, is supposed to be the blowpipe used by Love the goldsmith to inflame the fierce fire of separation (25.23). The go-between tells the lover:

> 'Today she has burnt only the petal of her lip
> with the touch of her heated sighs—
> go to her before her body is completely burned!
> Dispel her jealous anger.'[135]

All that her friends can do is of no avail:

> 'The pearl necklace is useless!
> Fie on his bed made of lotus fibres!
> And what use are lotuses!
> Throw the camphor far away!
> What use are these lumps of ice!
> Don't put yourselves to too much trouble for nothing—
> her burning fever, whatever it is,
> is stronger.'
> Thus her friends,

[133] The text of this verse is incomplete.
virahānala......tattanuṭāṃkāra ivopaśuśruve/
śayanīkṛtaphullapaṅkajasphuṭapakṣmāspadaṣaṭpadāravaḥ//24.33//

[134] niḥśvāsamārutaparāhatapuṇḍarīkaparyaṅkapiṅgalaparāgakaṇāpadeśāt/
reje viyogaśikhibhītipalāyamānagaurātmadehaparamāṇuguṇeva kācit//24.46//

[135] dhṛtoṣmabhiḥ śvāsasamīrapātair nidagdham evoṣṭhadalaṃ tayādya/
na dahyate yāvad alaṃ śarīram upaihi tāṃ tāvad apāsya mānam//25.33//

O highly favoured one!
speak among themselves,
their eyes filled with tears.[136]

Encouraged by the go-between the lover comes, and the gradually intensifying fires find their culmination in a metallurgical image of great effectiveness:

The two young people,
whose bodies gradually expanded with horripilation,
then ‹became timid›/‹shrank›
but were, in their embrace,
having long ‹suffered›/‹been heated›,
welded together in all their limbs.[137]

The *sargas* of love in separation have their own minor culmination here in advance of the general lovemaking of *sarga* 27.

In *sarga* 26 'the lovers, their hearts full of the nectar of affection, made the willing women drink wine.'[138] The *mast* elephant of drunkenness, charging unrestrainedly, attacked the rampart of firmness in women's eyes (26.33). Fortitude plunged into a lake of wine (26.77).

‹Passion›/‹redness› took over their lotus faces
and their hearts,
their gaze and their bodies became sluggish,
their gait and their voice,
with soft ‹steps›/‹words›,
stumbled,
when the wine went to the *apsaras'* heads.[139]

[136] vyartho hāro mṛṇālaiś citam api śayanaṃ dhik kim ambhoruhair vā
karpūraṃ dūra eva kṣipata himaśilāśarkarābhiḥ kim ābhiḥ/
mithyā maivātikhedaṃ bhajata gurutaraḥ ko'pi dāhajvaro'syā
ity anyonyaṃ tadālyaḥ subhaga parigadanty aśrupūraplutākṣyaḥ//25.40//

[137] romañcapīnatanutāṃ dadhatoḥ krameṇa
saṃprāptayos taruṇayor atha kātaratvam/
āliṅganena cirasaṃbhṛtaviprayoga-
taptākhilāṅgaghaṭanā sudṛḍhā babhūva//25.70//

[138] anukūlavṛttīḥ/premāmṛtārdramanaso dayitā madhūni...vadhūr apīpyan//-26.1//

[139] jagrāha vaktrakamalaṃ hṛdayaṃ ca rāgo
dṛṣtis tanuś ca parimantharatāṃ prapede/
caskhāla komalapadaṃ gamanaṃ vacaś ca
cetasy upeyuṣi madaṃ surasundarīṇām//26.83//

The upward curving necks of the wine jars remind the poet of geese, and he is led on to compare the drinking hall to the celestial river (26.2). The merrymakers were earlier bathing—we are thus reminded of the continuity of action. The comparison is also appropriate in that the wine is not only like the river in being liquid—it too has waves, and lotuses float on it, within the goblets. As in the river scenes, lotuses participate in the proceedings:

When the wine was poured out,
the lotus bobbed up quickly
in the excitement of mounting
the swing of the billowing waves;
but when the wine was gone,
as if in grief
the lotus, hunched up,
lay face downwards.[140]

The moon is reflected in the wine in the cups. The women's breathing makes the wine tremulous, and the reflected moon is thought to be trying to wash off its stain (26.17). One woman, whose drunkenness was becoming apparent, dropped her crystal goblet, as if, though emptied of wine, it were heavy with the reflected moon (26.36). The moon is also reflected in the women's cheeks, and in the jewelled flower. One woman, in her drunkenness thinking the moon reflected on the floor a giant cup full of yellow liquor, tries to pick it up (26.54). Drunkenness makes the women's eyes roll, reddens their eyes and their cheeks.

The beginning of *sarga* 27 clearly sets the scene, as is often the case with the first verse of a *sarga*. The young men, tardy with drunkenness and love, make their way to couches with their women who in their great passion for lovemaking pretend to be sleepy (27.1). This is the only mention of the men being drunk. As the lover removes the lady's garment, the lamp betook itself to the lady's cheek in the guise of its reflection there, before she could throw her ear-lotus at it (27.2). Love takes up his bow to

[140] āvarjite sapadi yatra taraṅgabhaṅga-
dolādhiroharabhasāt sahasodanaṃsīt/
niḥśeṣite madhuni tatra śuceva jāta-
saṃkocam utpalam adhomukhatām ayāsīt//26.19//

split the lovers' hearts (27.3)—a rare instance of Love attacking men in the *sargas* of the pleasure sequence. Nevertheless, as usual, it is to the women's hearts that the hard arrows fly (27.4).

Throughout the *sarga* there is a rhythmic alternation of metres. The general pattern in the *sarga* is two verses in Vasanta-tilaka metre alternating with the Puṣpitāgra followed by an Upajāti. For the last half of the *sarga* the place of the Upajāti is taken by a Vaṃśastha.

Only in the matter of scratch marks does Ratnākara use those specific details which are given in the treatises on sexual love: marks like a peacock's foot and a hare's jump (27.70). One verse punningly refers to a lover's skill in the variety of copulatory positions: a pun on a woman as Love's flute leads him into this unwonted detail.[141] Several verses describe the *viparīta*, 'upside-down position', where the woman is on top: a woman's cosmetic painting, washed off by her sweat, seem to flee as if in shame at her impropriety (27.95). But this position is a standard theme of *kāvya*. Typical of the veiled allusions the poet permits himself are the following: softly moaning, with trembling hand a woman pushes her lover's hand from her breasts down to her navel (27.101). A woman's train of hair, undone, obtained the unparalleled delight of kissing her round buttock (27.103). Men's bliss is no more than kissing: like a yogin in that he never shut his eyes during the festival of lovemaking, a man won immortality in drinking the liquid nectar on a woman's lower lip (27.106). When their exertions are at last ended and the couples fall asleep on their jewelled couches, the night is already drawing to its close, and dawn winds blow upon them (27.116).

The most striking feature of the pleasure sequence is the relationship between men and women. In the main, the men are the guides and mentors of the silly women. This is no doubt a reflection of the fact that those who were able kept themselves supplied with young women. The lover taken aback and looking like a scarecrow (17.90) is quite anomalous. Symptomatic of the relations between men and women in the pleasure sequence is this:

> When their bodies,
> as if each were Love's crown prince,

[141] *Karaṇa*, which as a technical term in music signifies 'rhythm' also means 'copulatory position'.

were anointed
with drops of sweat at the lovers' touch,
the petticoats of the tremulous-eyed women
were straightway granted release
from their bonds.[142]

The man is the power behind the throne, the almost unseen mover of the feminine universe.

[142] vapuṣi dayitasaṅgato'ṅgatoyaiḥ smarayuvarāja ivābhiṣicyamāne/
prathamataram avāpi bandhanebhyas taraladṛśām atha nīvibhir vimokṣaḥ//27.14//

CHAPTER 8

The Gods and the Goddess

Kāvya often adopts a neutral attitude towards the gods. Two clear instances of this neutrality are provided by Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*. The banished *yakṣa*, asking a cloud to take a message to his beloved, describes the journey. He mentions a Śiva temple the cloud will have to pass over, and recommends that the messenger pause there till evening:

> By serving as praiseworthy drum at the evening worship of Śiva
> thou shalt attain the perfect reward of thy deep-rumbling thunder.[1]

This adventitious substitution is typical of *kāvya*—the substitution of thunder for drum, of a fake for the real. And it is to be repeated:

> ...taking on the twilight glow, red as new-opened
> China-rose blooms,
> When the dance begins, supply Śiva's need for the bloody
> elephant's skin,
> While Bhavānī views thy piety with unwavering eyes, for her
> fright is stilled.[2]

This is very different from the original event, when the elephant demon attacked Śiva. In Heinrich Zimmer's words:

> The god, having compelled his powerful opponent to dance against him, went on and on with the dance until his victim fell dead, then flayed him, donned the skin as a kind of mantle, and finally, wrapped in this dripping trophy, performed at dusk a horrendous solo of triumph before his divine consort the goddess.[3]

Iconographic texts emphasize that Pārvatī should be depicted in great fear at such a ghastly sight; in this verse from the

[1] *Meghadūta* 34 (trans. Edgerton and Edgerton, p. 31):
kurvan saṃ dhyābalipaṭahatāṃ śūlinaḥ ślāghanīyām
āmandrāṇāṃ phalam avikalaṃ lapsyase garjitānām//

[2] *Meghadūta* 36 (trans. Edgerton and Edgerton, p. 31):
sāṃdhyaṃ tejaḥ pratinavajapāpuṣparaktaṃ dadhānaḥ/
nṛttārambhe hara paśupater ārdranāgājinecchāṃ
śāntodvegastimitanayanaṃ dṛṣṭabhaktir bhavānyā//

[3] Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. 1, p. 360.

Meghadūta the poetic imagination obviates any necessity for her moving away from her lord, 'for her fright is stilled'. *Kāvya* is here an anodyne to the numinous; the neutral attitude neutralizes.

An instance of neutrality bordering on the frivolous is Ratnākara's conceit that the skulls on Śiva's head, splashed with blood from the dripping elephant skin, seem to have been chewing betel:

> the group of skulls, the crest on his head,
> spattered in places
> by the blood flowing from the elephant skin,
> seemed to have rows of teeth
> red with the stain of betel.[4]

To the courtier, languidly chewing his betel as he listens to this verse, the dread Śiva Gajāntaka, from whom even the goddess backs away in horror, can be of no great moment.

A certain arrogance is inherent in *kāvya*. As in any highly-wrought art, the poet is absorbed in the demands of his métier; all else is transitory. The world he describes, the world exterior to his art, is a world of illusion and delusion.

> Śiva [as he dances], noticing
> the gale of his waving arms
> knocking down from the sky
> the disc of the moon,
> imagines
> it's just one of the skulls
> falling off his crest
> as he shakes his head.[5]

Even Śiva gets it wrong; the cognoscente will congratulate himself on perceiving the true version of reality. But the poet sets up the delusion, he allows his art to distort so that the

[4] stamberamājinagalatkṣatajāvaseka-
sampāditāruṇarucā kvacid uttamāṅge/
tāmbūlarāgaparipāṭalayeva danta-
paṅktyā virājitakirīṭakapālakhaṇḍam//2.7//
The verse comes in a kulaka; the final compound is masc. sing. agreeing with *enam* in verse 3.

[5] tena vyalokyata valadbhujadaṇḍakhaṇḍa-
caṇḍānilāhativighaṭṭanaviprakīrṇam/
prabhraṣṭam ambaratalād vidhutottamāṅga-
visrastaśekharakapāladhiyendubimbam//2.45//

measured perfection of his verse contrasts with the muddled world. When *kāvya* deals with the gods this manipulation is the more striking.

Johnston said of the classical Sanskrit poet, 'Above all enthusiasm is taboo and good taste his god.'[6] This is largely true, but we should remember that the poeticians give many instances of the best poets' contravention of good taste (*aucitya*). If Ānandavardhana really was troubled by Kālidāsa's description of Śiva's marital lovemaking,[7] what would he have made of this verse from Spring's address to Śiva:

> Well, well! a likely lover you
> for Mother Nature!
> You can't do anything anywhere,
> you ‹of wide extent, without emotion or birth›/
> ‹very fat, and bereft of passion or even sentiment›,
> ‹bodiless›/‹your body contemptible›,
> ‹devoid of sensory perception›/
> ‹unemployed; incapable of any copulatory position›.[8]

Is the poet's love of punning greater than his love for his god? But the verse is less amazing when set beside a verse later in the *sarga*:

> O lord! Without beginning or end,
> not begetting yet engaged
> in generating the universe,
> though you are ‹the source of the constituents of matter›/
> ‹have your origin in merit›,
> you are not praised for lineage![9]

The hymn to Śiva moves on from its Sāṃkhyan position to one more properly Śaivite, but both verses find their force in paradox. The most fervent of Śaivite poets in Sanskrit,

[6] E. H. Johnston, *The Buddhacarita, or Acts of the Buddha* (Calcutta, 1936), Vol. 2, p. xcvi.

[7] *Dhvanyāloka:vṛtti* ad 3.5, ed. Pāthak, p. 346. Ānandavardhana decides that Kālidāsa's genius conceals the inherent impropriety.

[8] prathitaprapañcarasabhāvavarjitaḥ kvacid eva kiṃcid api kartum akṣamaḥ/
avapur gataḥ karaṇavṛttiśūnyatāṃ prakṛter aho nu sadṛśo'si kāmukaḥ//6.19//

[9] jagatāṁ anādinidhanasya tasthuṣo janakatva eva jananojjhitasthiteḥ/
tava nātha saty api guṇādisambhave na hi saṃbhavaty abhijanāśrayā stutiḥ// 6.72//

Utpala, calls Śiva a shameless and prodigal bastard, punningly.[10] Śiva is a paradoxical god and an outsider figure. Nevertheless, the offensive detail of the earlier verse perhaps reflects a degree of malice on the part of the gods' deputation towards Śiva who has shown himself to be in happy ignorance of their plight; but any such feeling on their part quickly fades in the swelling tide of devotion in *sarga*.[6]

In *kāvya* in general, the gods figure largely; it might be said that familiarity breeds neutrality. Wilson remarked in the preface to his Sanskrit Dictionary,

> incidental reference to a deity by one of his many titles, and fanciful allusions to a flower or plant, constitute half, or more than half, of the poetry of the Hindus. Their mythology is the main structure, their botany the chief decoration, of their poetical compositions.[11]

But gods just as much as flowers provide 'decoration'. Mythology does provide plots, but only the bare outline of the myth is used by the poet. The structure of the *Haravijaya* owes the smallest of debts to the eponymous myth of Śiva's victory over Andhaka.

In its drastic curtailment of the myths it uses, *kāvya* reveals itself to be inimical to myth. Unlike *kāvya*, myth is unruly, uncouth. Typically, Bāṇa's Harṣa is gloriously superior to myth:

> His youthful exploits, unlike Kṛṣṇa's, transgress not right; his freaks of power cause no offence to the man of refinement as did those of Śiva ... Wonderful is his royalty, surpassing the gods![12]

It is, perhaps, in inverse proportion to *kāvya*'s distaste for the living reality of myth, for the full myth, that it uses snippets of myths so plentifully. 'Many works of literary art,' observes Gonda, 'are replete with mythological allusions, the divine figures and histories being a source of inspiration which never dries up.'[13] This, I think, is to overlook the neutrality, the decorativeness, of such allusions. There is an element of truth in Andhaka's punning comparison of the gods to flowers (*sumanaḥ*) (45.40).

[10] *Śivastotrāvalī* 9.6; cf. Lilian Silburn, *La Bhakti* (Paris, 1964), p. 80.

[11] Horace Hayman Wilson, *A Dictionary, Samscrit and English* (Calcutta, 1819), p. xlvi.

[12] *Harṣacarita ucchvāsa* 2, ed. Kane, p. 35, lines 22–7 (trans. Cowell and Thomas, p. 64 f.): nāsya harer iva vṛṣavirodhīni bālacaritāni, na paśupater iva dakṣodvegakāriṇy aiśvaryavilasitāni ... citram idam atyamaraṃ rājatvam. Cowell and Thomas note that Vṛṣa may also mean a demon slain by Kṛṣṇa, and that Dakṣa is Śiva's father-in-law.

[13] Gonda, *Viṣṇuism and Śivaism*, p. 123.

However, whereas Bāṇa continually and promiscuously refers to all the gods in his comparisons, to name but one other poet, Ratnākara is more coherent and purposive. A lotus pool likened to Śiva's city (3.28); an *aśoka* tree likened to Śiva's third eye (3.34); rain clouds dark as Śiva's throat (3.43); the sun resembling Śiva's third eye (19.14): such incidental comparisons reflect the truth that Śiva is everything.

Yet, in the *Haravijaya* as elsewhere, the gods are very often colour images, like flowers, and are referred to in terms of colours. This is particularly evident in the first and third verses of the *Haravijaya*.

Let Heavy-haired Śiva,
whose beautiful throat
(where the deep coloured poison
resembles a lovely garland of blue lotus blooms)
seems smoky coloured from imbibing
the offerings of incense,
impart to you every happiness.[14]

May Hari's ‹form›/‹drama›—
‹the mouth gaping wide›/‹where there is an opening of the plot›
‹the image of the face›/‹the progression of the plot›
manifest in the mirror of his claws,
‹full of›/‹the development of the plot› great rage,
engendering «the anxious reflection» in the foe's forces
that is «the pause in the plot»,
culminating in the slaying of the arrogant demon—
purify you.[15]

May the round pericarp of the lotus
on which sits Lotus-seated Brahmā,
with encircling row of white petals.
like the mountain of the gods
encompassed by the multitudinous waves

[14] kaṇṭhaśriyaṃ kuvalayastabakābhirāma-
dāmānukārivikaṭacchavikālakūṭām/
bibhrat sukhāni diśatād upahārapīta-
dhūpotthadhūmamalinām iva dhurjaṭir vaḥ//1.1//

[15] jṛmbhāvikāsitamukhaṃ nakhadarpaṇāntar-
āviṣkṛtapratimukhaṃ gururoṣagarbham/
rūpaṃ punātu janitāricamūvimarśam
udvṛttadaityavadhanirvahaṇaṃ harer vaḥ//1.2//

of the agitated milk ocean,
purify you.[16]

It is convenient to cite all three benedictory verses together, but I shall leave the second verse aside for the time being.

Both Śiva and Brahmā yield equal place to lotuses. Śiva is dark blue, Brahmā is white. All Śiva's other aspects are overwhelmed by the coloured mark on his throat.

As it happens, *kālakūṭa* is not often mentioned in invocations of literary works prior to Ratnākara. Śūdraka (fourth-century dramatist) and Bāṇa being, as far as I know, the only authors who so use it. The *Harṣacarita* begins thus:

> Adoration to Śambhu, who is the main pillar in the building of the city of the three worlds,—beautiful with the moon hung on him like a white royal chowrie, as it kisses his lofty brow.
>
> I worship Umā, whose eyes are closed with the delight of grasping Hara's neck as if she were fainting at the touch of the Kālakūṭa poison which stains it.[17]

Beside this may be set the earlier example of Śūdraka:

May Śambhu's trance protect you,
whose knees are bound by snakes
double-knotted from his cross-legg'd posture;
each sense, repressed by meditation,
ceasing to function from the stopping of his breath;
who sees with vision absolute
the senseless self within the self:—
a trance which rests in brahma, which is dissolution,
born of the sight that sees the void.[18]

[16] paryantavartiparipāṇḍurapattrapaṅkti-
padmāsanāsanakuśeśayakoṣacakram/
yuṣmān punātu dadhad uddhatadugdhasindhu-
vīcicchaṭāvalayitāmaraśailalīlām//1.3//

[17] *Harṣacarita ucchvāsa* 1, verses 1 & 2, ed. Kane, p. 1 (trans. Cowell and Thomas, p. 1):
namas tuṅgaśiraścumbicandracāmaracārave/
trailokyanagarārambhamūlastambhāya śambhave//
harakaṇṭhagrahānandamīlitākṣīṃ namāmy umām/
kālakūṭaviṣasparśajātamūrcchāgamām iva//

[18] *Mṛcchakaṭika* 1.1; *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 57 (trans. Ingalls):
paryaṅkāśleṣabandhadviguṇitabhujagagranthisaṃvītajānor
antaḥprāṇāvarodhād uparatasakaladhyānaruddhendriyasya/
ātmany ātmānam eva vyapagatakaraṇam paśyatas tattvadṛṣṭyā
śaṃbhor vaḥ pātu śūnyekṣaṇaghaṭitalayabrahmalagnaḥ samādhiḥ//

May the throat of Blue-throated Śiva,
resembling a dark cloud against which
Gaurī's creeper-like arm shines like a streak of lightning,
protect you.[19]

Both instances imply, I think, a connection between the poison and the meditative trance of the god: the motionless pillar that is the *liṅga*, and the no less motionless yogin. Both juxtapose the delicate goddess to the deadly poison. Śūdraka contrasts the darkness of the poison with the golden colour of the goddess. Comparison with these verses enables us to see the starkness, the baldness of Ratnākara's first verse. The darkness of the poison is unrelieved by any contrast. The blue lotuses and the smoke of offerings serve only to intensify the darkness of the *kālakūṭa*.

The neutrality of *kāvya*'s attitude to the gods is, then, found at the very beginning of Ratnākara's poem: Śiva is reduced to colour alone, and the darkest of colours at that. Yet, there is ample significance in the mark that the poison left on Śiva's throat. Śiva swallowed the poison churned up from the ocean, a fiery poison that threatened to destroy the whole world. Śiva is thereby a saviour god, though at the same time his act of redemption led him to contain within himself that from which he saved the world and thus to partially embody it.

The allusion to offerings (*upahāra*) reminds us of Śiva as the object of temple worship, and we may recall here the black *liṅga* gleaming in the gloom of the *garbhagṛha*, the central shrine. This is the living religious reality of every day, when one prays for happiness (*sukhāni diśatād*); whereas the next two verses are to have a more routine result—purification (*punātu ... vaḥ*, *yuṣmān punātu*).

The term *upahāra* occurs only here in the poem; only here the practical dimension. The mythical and iconographical *kālakūṭa*, however, is often mentioned throughout the poem. It serves to counterbalance Śiva's many white attributes, the moon and Gaṅgā on his head, the whiteness of his laugh, and the white ashes smeared on his body. Another attribute of Śiva's is commonly mentioned in benedictory verses—the third eye

[19] *Mṛcchakaṭika* 1.2, ed. N. B. Godabole (Bombay, 1896):
pātu vo nīlakaṇṭhasya kaṇṭhaḥ śyāmāmbudopamaḥ/
gaurībhujaḷatā yatra vidyullekheva rājate//

blazing on his forehead. But all these other attributes here give place to the stain of the poison.

The churning of the ocean to produce nectar (*amṛta*) is a key myth in *kāvya*. Poets liken to it their own production of *rasa*.[20] But a by-product is the poison; and poets seeking to create a perfect world cannot keep imperfection out of it. The first half of the *Haravijaya* takes place on Mount Mandara, and several references to *kālakūṭa* arise from the fact that this mountain was the gods' churning stick. The sapphire rocks on the mountain are compared, naturally, to lumps of *kālakūṭa* thrown up by the waves of the milk ocean when churned (4.15). In the description of moonrise in the middle of the pleasure section, the moonbeams mixing with incense smoke that streams from the windows are likened to the waves of the milk ocean blended with the poison when Mandara was upside down and churning (20.46).

Seldom is the dreadfulness of the poison spelled out. The smoke given off by one *gaṇa*-lord as he slaps his shoulders rises up to his neck and is compared to Śiva's mark of 'naturally malign' (*prakṛtiniṣṭhura*) *kālakūṭa* (13.5). And, yet more clearly:

> The flood of poison,
> flame of the fire that burns up the universe,
> settled on his neck
> as if thinking,
> 'There's no room for me
> in that heart
> soaked in the nectar of love for Pārvatī.'[21]

Śiva is the master of poisons and at the same time the perfect husband. His ability to absorb is also manifested in his merging with Pārvatī; in this verse, he seems to swallow her up:

> Acquiring a body of black night
> the daughter of the mountain,
> under the guise of the vivid dark lustre
> of the patch of poison,
> seems not to leave your neck for a moment.[22]

[20] Cf. the verses cited above, pp. 112 ff.

[21] premāmṛtena girirājasutāśrayeṇa
 na plāvite'tra hṛdaye'sti mamāvakāśaḥ/
yasyādhikaṃdharam itīva padaṃ babandha
 saṃdhukṣitatribhuvanāgniśikho viṣaughaḥ//1.50//

[22] pratipadya kṛṣṇarajanīmayaṃ vapur girikanyakeva tava nojjhati kṣaṇam/
sphuṭakālakūṭaviṣadhūsaraprabhāpaṭalacchalena pṛthukaṇṭhamaṇḍalam//6.176//

Here poetry reverses myth. In myth Śiva mocks Pārvatī's black skin and through *tapas* she regains his love by becoming golden; here the golden goddess seems to become black to keep as close as possible to her lord.

Siva's greatest act is to swallow up the universe at Doomsday:

> The throat of this Śiva,
> thanks to the shadow of *kālakūṭa*
> dark as the clouds of Doomsday,
> seems to be filled
> with the gloom of hell,
> as it is when in the dissolutions of the universe
> he swallows all the seven worlds.[23]

The poison that threatens the whole universe is nullified by being swallowed by Śiva, but when Śiva swallows the universe he is doing the poison's work for it. He has, however, reduced to some order the terrifying disorder of which the poison is the essence.

In fact, *kālakūṭa* is almost always referred to significantly in the *Haravijaya*. It is not what I call neutralized when in 6.179 its similarity to a dark rain-cloud makes Kumāra's peacock dance in front of Śiva: here the terror of the god is nullified in the bosom of his family. And often there is a special point in this particular comparison, as here:

> That ‹watery›/‹emotional› time of year appeared,
> when lines of clouds,
> slow moving with their water,
> are the colour of Śiva's neck,
> making travellers' wives tremble.[24]

A common effect of poisons is to produce trembling, as is indicated by another name given to *kālakūṭa*—*halāhala*, from a root *hal* meaning 'to shake, to shudder'. A variant of *halāhala*, *hālahala*, is also used with reference to love in separation:

[23] saṃvartameghamalinacchavikālakūṭa-
cchāyācchalena bhuvanapralayāgameṣu/
ābhāty ayaṃ kavalitākhilasaptaloka-
pātālarandhratamaseva niruddhakaṇṭhaḥ//9.70//

Properly, the compound *kavalitasaptaloka-* should apply to *tamasā*, but as the commentary says, it has to be taken as above.

[24] dadhati yatra payodharapaṅktayo giriśakaṇṭharuciṃ jalamantharāḥ/
sa kṛtapānthavadhūjanavepathū rasamayaḥ samayaḥ sma vijṛmbhate//3.43//

As if smeared with masses of *kālakūṭa*
flown up in the guise of the lunar spot
at the commotion of the churning of the ocean,
the moon's beams,
though shedding nectar,
made swoon the women sick with separation.[25]

The cosmic poison, vague and general in its effects so far, is localized in the sufferings of love-sick women.

It is not till the end of the poem that another implicit meaning of *kālakūṭa* is brought out into the open. The *kālakūṭa* is Andhaka:

Then he who had swallowed the Andhaka *kālakūṭa*
in the ocean of battle
in which the whole multitude of gods and demons
had suffered,
showed to Indra
the Fortune of his kingdom
seated on his shoulder
and fanned by the chowries
the Maruts waved.[26]

Andhaka, 'the blind one', is aptly likened to the black poison. The black or dark-blue Śiva of the beginning of the poem gave birth to the dread demon: in this verse, what came out of Śiva in one form comes back into him in another. In a sense, the initial verse, blank and neutral though it is, prefigures the huge and varied development of the poem.

Turning from the first to the third benedictory verse, we move from black to white.

May the round pericarp of the lotus
on which sits Lotus-seated Brahmā
with encircling row of white petals,
like the mountain of the gods

[25] digdhā ivodadhiviloḍanavibhramottha-
laksmacchalocchalita*hālahala*cchaṭābhiḥ/
mūrchāṃ vyadhuḥ śaśabhṛtaḥ kiraṇāḥ sudhāmbu-
viṣyandino'pi virahāturasundarīṇām//24.42//

[26] grāsīkṛtārditasurāsuracakravāla-
saṅgrāmasāgaragatāndhakakālakūṭaḥ/
nirdhūtacāmaramarutparivījitāṃsa-
pīṭhe dideśa haraye'tha sa rājyalakṣmīm//50.90//

encompassed by the multitudinous waves
of the agitated milk ocean
purify you.[27]

A less forceful verse than its two predecessors, where the subject and object, god and devotees, are held back until the end of the verse in direct and intimate contact (*dhurjaṭir vaḥ//*, *rūpaṃ ... harer vaḥ//*). The god is overshadowed by his seat. The yellow pericarp of the lotus on which Brahmā is perched resembles Meru, the golden mountain at the centre of the world. In contrast to the dark aspect of Śiva and the horror of Viṣṇu as man-lion (1.2) we have the amiable, bumbling figure of Brahmā whose soft-hearted accession to the requests of demons has often given trouble to the universe. It is Brahmā who grants sight to Andhaka (6.192) and thus enables him to conquer the world.

The second time in the poem that Ratnākara refers to Brahmā, he makes ironical use of that god's title 'Supreme Lord' (*parameṣṭhin*):

On Śiva's head
the skull of the Supreme Lord's head
is a remarkable sight,
gurgling in the depths of its hollow interior
filled with Gaṅgā's waters
as if even today
sounding forth the Vedas without respite.[28]

Śiva cut off Brahmā's fifth head with his thumbnail.[29] Kālamusala likens Śiva's crest moon jogged by Gaṅgā's wave to the nail that tore off the head of the Supreme Lord (8.8). Note that *kāvya* has no interest in the meaning or the details of myth; but as we

[27] paryantavartiparipāṇḍurapattrapaṅkti-
padmāsanāsanakuśeśayakoṣacakram/
yuṣmān punātu dadhad uddhatadugdhasindhu-
vīcicchaṭāvalayitāmaraśailalīlām//1.3//

[28] mandākinīsalilanirbharapūryamāṇa-
gambhīrakukṣikuharodgatatāranādam/
adyāpi yasya śirasi śriyam ety aśānta-
vedadhvanīva parameṣṭhiśiraḥkapālam//1.43//

Brahmā's former dignity as source of the Vedas is reduced to that of being a zealous chanter.

[29] For a full discussion of this myth, see O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism*, pp. 123–7.

shall see later, such references to myth have a cumulative effect that goes beyond the conceits of individual verses.

Having four heads Brahmā was called 'Four-faced' (*caturmukha*), a name used to good effect by Prabhāmaya:

> '[When fire comes out of Śiva's third ey^
> to destroy the universe]
> from Four-faced Brahmā's lotus seat
> that's coloured by the red rays
> there spurts a stream of juice
> squeezed out
> by his turnings to and fro in anxiety
> to find out what's going on.'[30]

Usually the name Ratnākara uses for Brahmā is 'Lotus-seated', an epithet expressive of the god's subordinate position, for the lotus rises from Viṣṇu's navel, and also of his weakness. Śiva's rosary is made from seeds from the seat-lotuses of innumerable departed lotus-seated Brahmās (*paṅkajāsana*) (21.28). The name Caturmukha is again used significantly in Aṭṭahāsa's speech:

> When Four-faced Brahmā was born
> his seat was on the loftiest point
> of the pericarp of the lotus
> in the navel of Viṣṇu
> who lay on the coils of Śeṣa
> who was in the belly of Śiva
> who had swallowed the oceans.[31]

At first sight, Brahmā's vantage point should give him an excellent view in all directions, but in reality everything is within Śiva.

The gurgling skull of Brahmā's fifth head on Śiva's crest seems to carry on reciting the Vedas (1.43): only in the sixth *sarga* (6.33) are Brahmā's connections with the Vedas taken seriously. According to Śikhaṇḍin, the contemporary demon Bhāvayavya ripped out the lotus from Viṣṇu's navel to provide an ornament for his leader's Fortune, pulling Brahmā's stool from beneath him while he still recited (16.49).

[30] kim etad ity ākulatāvivartaniṣpīḍitasyaiva caturmukhena/
raktacchaṭābhāsanapaṅkajasya galaty amandaṃ makarandavṛṣṭiḥ//9.68//

[31] amuṣya garbhīkṛtasāgarodarapratiṣṭhaśeṣoragabhogaśāyinaḥ/
muradviṣo nābhisarojakarṇikāviṭaṅkapīṭhaḥ samabhūc caturmukhaḥ//12.66//

Brahmā's seat is indeed highly vulnerable. Its petals wither under the snow that is the ash falling off the dancing Śiva (2.46); the whole lotus is turned to ashes by the Aurva fire (9.36). This fragile seat is in 1.3 compared to the mountain at the centre of the world, immensely high, untouched at doomsday. However, the lotus is the basis and the beginning of the creation of the universe; and the world as a whole is spoken of as the world-lotus.[32] Thus, the source of things (the lotus) is compared in 1.3 to the centre of things (Meru). The colour correspondence is exact: the golden mountain to the yellow pericarp, the white waves to the white petals. The agitation of the waves, nevertheless, like the massivity of the mountain, contrasts with and points to the fragility of the lotus and Brahmā. Again, the mild verse, its vapidity even, contrasts with the blackness of the first verse, and the violence of the second.

The second benedictory verse is quite unlike the other two. Charged with action, it makes no reference to colour.

May Hari's ‹form›/‹drama›—
‹the mouth gaping wide›/‹where there is an opening of the plot›,
‹the image of the face›/‹the progression of the plot›
manifest in the mirror of his claws,
‹full of›/‹the development of the plot› great rage,
engendering «the anxious reflection»
in the foe's forces
that is «the pause in the plot»,
culminating in the slaying of the arrogant demon—
purify you.[33]

The figure of the lion-headed Viṣṇu bursting forth from the pillar to rip out the demon's entrails is the most terrifying of Vaiṣṇava images. But what is it doing here? If Viṣṇu upstages Śiva, it is partly because the latter is the remoter god, more austere, beyond so mundane an action as demon slaying. It is Viṣṇu who is the 'cosmic policeman'.[34] Andhaka is the only

[32] As in 2.31. See below, pp. 246 ff and 287.

[33] jṛmbhāvikāsitamukhaṃ nakhadarpaṇāntar-
āviṣkṛtapratimukhaṃ gururoṣagarbham/
rūpam punātu janitāricamūvimarśam
udvṛttadaityavadhanirvahaṇaṃ harer vah//1.2//

[34] He is thus aptly termed by David R. Kinsley, 'Through the Looking Glass: Divine Madness in the Hindu Religious Tradition', *History of Religions*, Vol. 13, pp. 271–305, 1974, p. 272.

famous demon Śiva has to deal with, for normally his encounters are with other gods and *ṛṣis*. No demon could have been referred to in the first verse other than Andhaka. Śiva is essentially a far more terrible god than Viṣṇu[35]—in the course of the poem he emerges from the black obscurity of the first verse to put Viṣṇu into the shade.

Viṣṇu is alluded to many times in the course of the poem, and he leads the last unsuccessful attack on Andhaka in the penultimate *sarga*; yet in the description of the anger of Śiva's assembly in *sarga* 7, Viṣṇu is mentioned casually in the list of *gaṇas* (7.42). The second benedictory verse depicts Viṣṇu's greatest moment in the poem. Thereafter he declines. A look at some of his other appearances as Man-lion will be instructive.

The forces of nature are likened to the force of the god.

> Like the Man-lion
> the ocean was roaring loudly,
> its wave-paws
> with oyster shells for claws
> contemptuously ripping the rampart-chests
> of the mountain-demons on its shores,
> its bristling mane
> the flames of the submarine fire.[36]

Waves rise up and take particular forms in a manner parallel to the stone surface of the pillar springing into active shape. The world is entirely malleable in the poet's imagination, and the images of the gods are the best patterns. Poetry, however, is wilful. Viṣṇu's dread image is sometimes demoted. Even Vahnigarbha, the *gaṇa*-lord who eulogizes Viṣṇu in his speech, treats the Man-lion somewhat playfully, speaking of Hiraṇyakaśipu's claw wounds inspiring such jealous shame in the goddess of success that she left the demon (10.25). She mistook the gashes made by Viṣṇu for the work of a more passionate

[35] Cf. Ingalls' remark concerning the Viṣṇu section of SRK: 'The slaying of Hiraṇyakaśipu furnishes the sole exemplar of the terrible in the Vaiṣṇava poems of the present Section. The poets linger over examples of the gory dismemberment ... hereby offering a parallel to the visions of terror so frequently found in Śaiva verses.' *Anthology*, p. 96.

[36] helāvidāritataṭācaladaityavapra-
vakṣaḥsthalaprakaṭaśuktinakhormihastaḥ/
sindhur nṛsiṃha iva tāravirāvavṛttir
uddhūtavāḍavakṛśānuśikhāsaṭo'bhūt//22.27//

woman! Śikhaṇḍin, warning of the great prowess of demons, declares that Hiraṇyakaśipu's mighty son (whose name is not given) is undefeated by any god—his chest is too hard for even the Man-lion:

> When Viṣṇu who holds the bow Śārṅga
> was in his Man-lion form
> and roared like a thunder-cloud,
> Lakṣmī stood firm on the Vidūra ground
> that was the surface of the demon's chest,
> broken pieces of claw clinging to it
> as if the fresh sprigs of jewels springing up.[37]

According to poetic convention, beryl is produced on the Vidūra mountain by thunder. Nature is wonderfully potent, the god impotent.

Sikhaṇḍin becomes openly scornful:

> It was in fear of these demons
> who've made Indra's high Fortune,
> chowrie in her hand,
> completely subservient to themselves,
> that Viṣṇu, Kaiṭabha's foe,
> ‹took to the woods where boar and lion abound›/
> ‹took on the form of boar and then of lion›.[38]

Then again, the Man-lion is referred to neutrally. This happens, for example, almost immediately after the first reference. (There is a kind of echo of the three benedictory verses in the three following: Śiva, Viṣṇu, and the milk ocean are again referred to, in the same order.) This allusion is purely in terms of colour:

> Over this city
> in the night sky
> the digit of the moon
> reddened by the lustre of the ruby houses

[37] ālagnabhagnakarajāṅkurayā nṛsiṃha-
mūrtau navābhra iva garjati śārṅgapāṇau/
yasyotthitābhinavaratnaśalākayeva
lakṣmīr uraḥsthalavidūrabhuvā vidadhre//16.25//

[38] bibhyat sa kaiṭabharipuḥ sphuṭakolasiṃha-
rūpām avāpa vanabhūmim iva vyavasthām/
yebhyaḥ sacāmarakarām amarādhirāja-
lakṣmīṃ mukhekṣaṇaparāṃ paramāṃ dadhadbhyaḥ//16.76//

looks like the demon lord's chest
covered with blood
when rent by the Man-lion's claws.[39]

Five verses further on ruby is again compared to blood, when a sapphire palace with ruby windows on both sides is likened to Bāṇa's shoulders smeared with blood, when his many arms were sliced off by Viṣṇu's discus. The neutrality of this reference, its disregard of everything except colour, is especially striking, for the demon Bāṇa was a devotee of Śiva who gave him a thousand hands to destroy all his enemies. Another example of myth being used to substantiate colour is:

The sky shone
red in the glow of day's end,
taking after the ocean's water
tawny with pollen
from the lotus in Viṣṇu's navel
when it was shaken by the hands
of Madhu and Kaiṭabha
intent on his destruction.[40]

There is no mention of colour in the benedictory verse. That is not an ornamental verse. Not only does it punningly summarise the structure of a drama, but it presents the whole poem in essence. The god destroys the demon, order triumphs over disorder. And there is a special quality in the Man-lion image. Elsewhere the iconographic protagonists make use of weapons, but here the dreadful claws rip open the unprotected abdomen of the startled and helpless demon. The issue is never in doubt. Here is the total power which tantra dreams of; and thus it is that the image is particularly favoured in tantric writings.

Ratnākara's treatment of Viṣṇu, like that of the other, lesser

[39] yasyāṃ niśāsu gaganaṃ navapadmarāga-
sadmaprabhāruṇitamadhyagatendulekham/
vakṣo nṛsiṃhanakharair asurādhipasya
sāsṛkchaṭaṃ viṣamabhinnam ivācakāsti//1.5//

[40] ābhāsatāmbaratalaṃ divasāvasāna-
rāgāruṇacchavi viḍambayad ambu sindhoḥ/
bhaṅgābhiyuktamadhukaiṭabhahastadhūta-
vaikuṇṭhanābhinalinodaradhūlipiṅgam//19.18//

In *pada* c I have adopted the reading of the MS that the Kāvya Mālā editors cite as KH, replacing *hasti* with *hasta*.

gods, may well lapse into neutrality for most of the poem. But this is not so in the case of Śiva. Although in individual verses Ratnākara assumes the usual nonchalance of the classical poet, the almost constant presence of the god leads to a cumulative intensity in his image.

One form of Śiva favoured in benedictory verses is Naṭarāja. I have suggested that there is sufficient reason for Ratnākara to begin the poem the way he did; and he had reserved a whole *sarga* for the presentation of Śiva's most distinctive form. The desired parallel with a human king leads Ratnākara to begin with a description of Śiva's city; but in the second half of the first *sarga*, in the course of a résumé of Śiva's doings and attributes, Ratnākara gives a preliminary account of his dance—an activity which scarcely suits a city-dweller:

In the tumult of his *tāṇḍava* dances
which inaugurate the nights
of universal dissolution
the mighty mountains in front of him,
blown away by the wind
from his multiple outstretched arms,
seem to retreat in good order
to make room
for the supreme cosmic play of his footsteps.[41]

In the vehemence of his performance,
when his long leg is raised straight up
and the curved digit of the moon
is touched by his ankle
it looks like a ruby anklet
broken by the sharp peak
of one of the mountains he's overturned.[42]

When he performs his *tāṇḍava* dance
the mountains,
their connection with the surface of the earth

[41] saṃhārarātrimukhatāṇḍavaḍambareṣu
dordaṇḍakhaṇḍapavanābhihatāḥ purastāt/
yasya kramād apasaranti parikramaika-
līlāvakāśaghaṭanārtham ivādrināthāḥ//1.44//

[42] yasyānukārarabhasotthitadaṇḍapāda-
gulphāgrasaṃghaṭitamaṇḍalapūrvarekhaḥ/
paryastaparvataśitāśriviśīryamāṇa-
māṇikyapādakaṭakaśriyam eti candraḥ//1.45//

sundered
by the vibrations from his wonderful dance steps
blown upwards
by the wind from his multiple outstretched arms,
stay spinning in the sky
as if frightened of falling into hell.[43]

Shortly afterwards, we are given a full performance.

Then one day in playful mood
he gracefully took Pārvatī by the hand
to a peak of the mountain
and adorned by his presence
a pavilion in the pleasure-garden,
a place entwined
by fresh golden creepers.[44]

There to adore Śiva, 'who was well versed in stories anointed with sentiments appropriate for Pārvatī',[45] come the gods (2.2). The standard iconography of Śiva is rehearsed in a sequence of fifteen verses. Pārvatī is sitting in his lap (2.14); Śiva rests on the pillow of Nandin's hump and is fanned by the bull's bushy tail, his long arms folded (2.15). It is a family scene:

Śiva gazed
on the face of nearby Gaṇeśa
—who with the lustre of his tusk
destroyed
the dark shadow of the poison on his father's neck—
directing there the fiery light of his upper eye
like thick red-lead dust.[46]

[43] dordaṇḍakhaṇḍapavanocchalitā vicitra-
cārīvilāsadalitakṣitipīṭhabandhāḥ/
yasya bhramanti girayo'mbaramārga eva
pātālapātacakitā iva tāṇḍaveṣu//1.46//

[44] krīḍārasena sa kadācid athādhisānu
līlāvalambitahimādrisutākarāgraḥ/
pratyagrakāñcanalatāñcitasaṃniveśam
ākrīḍamaṇḍapam amaṇḍayad aśmadhāmnaḥ//2.1//

[45] adrirājakanyānukūlarasadigdhakathāvidagdham.

[46] dantaprabhādalitakaṇṭhaviṣāndhakāra-
cchāyasya saṃnidhijuṣaḥ karivaktramūrteḥ
ūrdhvekṣaṇānalaruco ghanacīnapiṣṭa-
dhūlīcchaṭā iva mukhe viniveśayantam//2.17//

It is a convention of *kāvya* that elephants like to batter mountains, and so get smeared with red-lead, especially on their temples. Ratnākara here uses colour to convey emotion. The light from the white tusk removes the dark poison: the black, terrible aspect of Śiva's character is ameliorated by the sight of his son. And in paternal generosity, by the light from his eye, here equivalent to the warmth of affection, he bestows upon his elephant-headed offspring the badge of true elephanthood.

The gods take their respective seats (2.18) and the drums strike up (2.19). Nandīśa beats the drum while Taṇḍu sings the Tāṇḍava (2.20). The Mātṛkās take Pārvatī into their midst to perform a dance-mine in praise of Śiva's principal deeds (2.21). The *gaṇa*-lords join in: 'they whirled in the actions of the mime, the colours of their bodies—yellow, pink, black, and jasmine-white—adorning the stage like the *rasas* incarnate'[47] (2.22). The rhythm of the dance is compulsive.

When Śiva the Foe of the Cities
rose in front of them
in his eagerness to teach
by personal demonstration
the intricacies of the dance,
the earth was pushed down,
crushing Śeṣa's hoods and strewing
the subterranean world
with bits of jewels.[48]

Śiva is well-known as teacher of the dance, as in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and in sculpture at Mahabalipuram.

As he stood up he disordered «the world»
as Viṣṇu's Boar Incarnation did «the waters»
for the ‹sun›/‹geese› disappeared
within plainly visible darkness;
all was wet as there rained down

[47] āpītapāṭalasitetarakundagauradehatviṣo...bhremur gaṇādhipatayo 'bhinayakriyāsu mūrtā rasa iva pariṣkṛtaraṅgapīṭhāḥ// Cf. *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.42 and 43.

[48] teṣāṃ puraḥ puraripau viṣamaprayoga-
nṛttopadeśarabhasāt svayam ujjihāne/
pātālarandhram abhavan naṭabhūmipīṭha-
niṣpiṣṭaśeṣaphaṇaratnakaṇāvakīrṇam//2.23//
Snakes' hoods contain jewels. See below, p. 281.

the spray of ‹his river's›/‹the ocean's› waters
that flowed off the bristles
that were his dark red matted locks.[49]

At the beginning of the *tāṇḍava* dance, Śiva's profoundest action, it is fitting that it is compared with the characteristic deed of his great rival. The hugely powerful figure of the boar rearing up with the tiny earth perched on his snout or shoulder was much loved by kings; nevertheless, beside the lithe and graceful Naṭarāja it is a figure of consummate clumsiness. Although Viṣṇu charitably saves the world from disaster, only the disorderly aspect of his action is mentioned.

As his arms white with their smearing of ash
speckled the sky in the whirling of his hands,
peacocks ran hither and thither
for they were excited at the row of splendid clouds,
their bodies crested by their
outfanning feathers.[50]

The rainy darkness of the previous verse is reduced to the promise of rain from the seeming clouds. The anticipation of the peacocks is also that of the audience. The birds' tails fanning out parallel these initial arm movements of Śiva. On their part, the excitement is sexual; Śiva's own excitement is not mentioned, but is implicit in his movements.

Suddenly those tree arms of his
pulverised the rocky peaks
of the mountain that is the limit
of the splendour of the sun's
illuminating beams,

[49] so'bhyutthito bhuvanam ākulayāṃ cakāra
vispaṣṭadṛṣṭatimiravyapalīnahaṃsam/
līlāvarāha iva dhūmrajaṭāsaṭāgra-
viṣyandisindhujalasīkaradurdinārdram//2.24//
I have emended 'dhūma' to 'dhūmra'. The printed text, as often, misprints 'viṣpandi' for 'viṣyandi'.

[50] bhasmāṅgarāgadhavaleṣu bhujeṣu tasya
kalmāṣayatsu gaganaṃ karavartanābhiḥ/
śubhrābhrarājicakitāḥ paripuñjyamāna-
picchāvacūlavapuṣaḥ śikhino vidadruḥ//2.25//

and the red glow from his close-fitting armlet snakes
broke the mass of darkness on the further side.[51]

The scene is suddenly extended beyond the boundaries of the world. Śiva's mere rising up disturbed the world beneath the earth (2.23); now, his gestures reach out into the unknown. In both instances it is the snakes, those anomalous, unearthly creatures, lurkers in the darkness, that are involved in this extra-terrestrial activity, the jewels in their hoods shining below and beyond our limited vision.

As, laughing, he threw
his arms in all directions,
his head shook in the successive movements
of the dance sequence,
and the divine river
poured over to gracefully become
the stage curtain of shining silk.[52]

Śiva's laughter follows from the destruction he has just dealt out to the Lokāloka mountain. The river, too, exceeds normal bounds, but is forced to follow gravity, whereas Śiva goes in all directions. In the previous verse the rocky peaks unavailingly oppose the dance; here the delicacy of falling water enhances it.

When he was just about to dance
the fire of his eye
checked the activity of the fierce-rayed sun,
leaving it a mere round disc:
it threw aside
the stage curtain that was the sunshine
with its rays which crimsoned the whole horizon.[53]

[51] gāḍhāṅgadoragaphaṇāmaṇiraśmirāga-
rugṇāndhakāranikarāparapārśvabhūmeḥ/
śailasya bhāskararucām avadhes tadīya-
bāhudrumaiḥ sapadi cukṣudire 'śmakūṭāḥ//2.26//

[52] vikṣiptabāhunivahasya vihasya dikṣu
tasyāṅgahārakaraṇakramakampimūrdhanaḥ/
agrātipātisalilā surasindhur āpac
cīnāṃśukojjvalatiraskaraṇīvilāsam//2.27//

[53] agre ninartiṣata eva vilocanāgnir
asyāśu piñjaritadiṅmukhacakravālaiḥ/
tigmāṃśubimbakaṭakapratibaddhavṛttir
arcibhir ātapatiraskariṇīṃ nirāsthat//2.28//
The compound in *pada* c is loosely constructed.

Śiva's first arm movements were a limbering up, such as was probably normally carried out behind the stage curtain.[54]

He turned into roads
the multitudes of mountains
pulverised by his outstretched arms
speeding in manifest circling movement,
as if to give a view in all directions
of the varied mime so actively performed.[55]

Having removed the stage curtain, Śiva continues to attend to his audience. The sweeping movements of his arms lead in the spectators towards himself—such is the significance of the 'roads' (*mārga*). In the next two verses the dance attains its full flowering.

There was a duplicate ocean of milk
full of whirlpools and towering waves by the thousand
in his two long and muscular arms,
white with the smearing of ashes,
revolving in the mighty gestures
of the dance movements.[56]

The serried petals
of the red flower-cup of the world-lotus
whereof the seedbox is the lofty mountain of gold
were formed in the circling movements of the dance

[54] Cf. the Kuchipudi type of Bharata Nāṭyam, of Andhran origin, and first used for Śiva-līlā: '...it is part of the conventional presentation to introduce the principal characters in the play by first presenting them behind a stretched piece of cloth which is held in position by two volunteers. This improvised screen does not cover the character fully, for the face and feet are left visible. A few steps are done by the character behind this curtain prior to its removal.' Mohan Khokar, 'Bhagavata Mela and Kuchipudi', *Marg*, Vol. X, No. 4, 1957, p. 32. This following detail may also be relevant: 'Another interesting feature of earlier times was that a kind of powder known in Telugu as *Guggilam* was used to provide a sudden flash of illumination at the important and climatic junctures of the play.' Ibid.

[55] ākṣipyamāṇavividhābhinayaprabandha-
saṃdarśanārtham iva sarvadiśāṃ purastāt/
vispaṣṭarecakarayākulabāhudaṇḍa-
piṣṭādrikūṭanikarān akarot sa mārgān//2.29//

[56] tasyaṅgahāravalitātanunṛttahasta-
bhasmāṅgarāgadhavalonnatapīnabahvoḥ/
sāvartacakravikaṭormighaṭāsahasra-
saṃkīrṇadugdhajaladhipratirūpatāsīt//2.30//

by his thousandfold hands,
palms as red as China roses in full bloom.[57]

The dance is justly likened to the two universals, the world-lotus and the milk ocean, for it is itself universal in its scope. The milk ocean of *kāvya* is not just one of the seven oceans so scathingly referred to by Macaulay, but is rather the archetypal ocean, of which the salt ocean is a lesser everyday manifestation. It is the essential liquid, source of all beautiful objects. From the ocean is produced the lotus, archetype of all living matter, and itself the source of creation when it springs from Viṣṇu's navel. All three, milk ocean, lotus, and the outline of dancing Śiva, are circular, and hence totalities. Note that the two verses are dangerously close in their notions—for no verse is ever to carry on exactly where the other left off—and so the lotus is a red one, to contrast with the white ocean, and the two arms become a thousandfold hands.

These two verses, in the middle of the *sarga*, are the high point of the dance, or rather, the best statements of its significance. I shall summarise the remainder of this magnificent *sarga*. His crest-moon, shaken down to his shoulders, seems to wish to accompany the black night that is the *kālakūṭa* mark on his throat (2.32). His whirling hands are day-lotuses in respect of the sun his third eye (2.33). The wind raised by his ash-smeared arms seemed to have lifted up the milk ocean to embrace the milky way (2.35). With his waving arms Śiva resembles Mount Kailāsa when its trees are shaken by the winds of doomsday (2.36). With the streaming lines of ash from his arms he seemed to be measuring out a new world to give himself sufficient scope for his dance (2.37). The rays in the sky from his fingernails seemed to be thousands of crescent moons (2.38). Frothy Gaṅgā on his matted locks made it seem he was still in the guise of a mountaineer (as when he confronted Arjuna) with his hair tied up with snakeskins (2.39). Śiva is now said to be wearing his lion skin, and thus the quarter-elephants—lions being superior to elephants—hurriedly sank to their knees (2.40). The claws of the lion skin, as if wishing to please the moon, husband of the

[57] vistāraśālikanakācalabījakoṣa-
cakrasya nṛttavalanāsu sahasrasaṃkhyaiḥ/
phullajjapāruṇatalair bhuvanāravinda-
koṣasya pattrapaṭalāyitam asya hastaiḥ//2.31//

stars, drew in the stars (2.41). Having obscured the mirror that is the sun with the dust from the mountains he had pulverized, he wanted to clean it with the ash from his arms (2.42). Touched by Śiva's upraised leg, the sun looks like Brahmā's pitcher (2.43). His arms ranging the sky looked like Gaṅgā's streams seeking the ocean (2.44). Knocking the moon down from the sky, he thought he had merely shaken a skull from his head (2.45). His ash fell like snow on Brahmā's lotus-seat, and his dance like winter ‹shook everything›/‹made everyone shiver›[58] (2.46). The lustre of the *kālakūṭa* on his neck was like doomsday's night, but the jewels of his necklace-serpents were stars (2.47). Śiva's hands drew the star-women into the bower of his matted locks where his crest-moon awaited them (2.48). When he raised his foot right up to his head, Gaṅgā seemed to be flowing from it, just as it did from Viṣṇu's foot (when that god kicked a hole in the cosmic egg to allow in the heavenly river) (2.49). When he struck the mountains with his hands, they spat out blood—the red-lead dust in their streams (2.50). The jewels on the hoods of of his black snakes were the flames of doomsday's night (2.51). His fiery gaze made the snakes on his wrists writhe and reveal their yellow bellies—thus they looked like gold bracelets (2.52). Punningly, Śiva was like a peacock (2.53), his dance like a beloved mistress (2.54): these two verses commence a slowing down of the dance. In his compassion Śiva slowed down, realizing that otherwise the world would split asunder (2.55). Since he did not kick through the shell of the cosmic egg, his dance was not fully performed (2.56). Gaṅgā's waters slopping around inside the skulls on his crest provided applause (2.57). The tension is further relaxed by the next verse, when Śiva's son Kumāra takes the crest-moon-digit and using it as a staff acts the clown (2.58).

We are reminded that Śiva's performance has been given as instruction:

> These are the delightful *karaṇas*
> that begin with 'flower-calyx palms',
> O *gaṇa*-lords!
> Thus are the modes of the *aṅgahāras*

[58] āhitasarvalokakampe.

that begin with the 'unmoving hand',
beautiful when performed in their full extent.[59]

'The *karaṇa* constitutes the coordination of the movement of the hands and feet ... The combination of six, seven, eight or nine *karaṇas* produce the *aṅgahāras* which are thirty-two in number. The *karaṇas* beginning with *talapuṣpapuṭa* up to *gaṅgāvataraṇa* constitute a rich variety of poses, never to be taken in static forms by themselves, but as a fleeting flash in a perennial sequence of dance movements.'[60] Ratnākara's succession of individual verses together constitute a flashing sequence remarkably parallel to the dance. In this description of Śiva's dance the unit made up of discrete verses finds its ultimate fulfilment.

Elsewhere, Ratnākara compares the *karaṇas* that make up an *aṅgahāra* to a necklace of pearls:

The women's necklaces with their pearls
had then quite the beauty
of *aṅgahāras* with their many *karaṇas*,
[for the pearls were]
‹of delightful form and on strings of manifest strength›/
‹their forms delightful because they showed the
quality of consistency›,
‹displayed to advantage›/‹including excellent postures›,
in no way deficient in their required qualities.[61]

The pearls that are the verses make up the necklace that is the *sarga*. *Kāvya* delights in that which is of the same nature as itself, in jewellery, in dance.

Appayyadīkṣita (sixteenth-century poet, philosopher, poetician) justly discerned a real link between poetry and dance:

[59] etāni tāni talapuṣpapuṭādikāni
cetoharāṇi karaṇāni gaṇādhināthāḥ/
ity aṅgahāravidhayaḥ sphuṭatatprapañca-
yogāñcitasthitibhṛtaḥ sthirahastamukhyāḥ//2.59//

[60] C. Sivaramamurti, *Naṭarāja in Art, Thought and Literature* (New Delhi, 1974), p. 17.

[61] vispaṣṭadraḍhimaguṇābhirāmarūpaiḥ
satsthānasthitibhir anūnalakṣaṇāḍhyaiḥ/
rāmāṇāṃ karaṇagaṇair ivāṅgahārā
nājahruḥ śriyam atha mauktikair na hārāḥ//17.28//

Comparison,
unique dancing girl
performing each and every role
on *kāvya*'s stage,
delights the hearts of connoisseurs.[62]

From its central point, from the theme in hand, the poet's imagination circles round in all directions. Both *kāvya* and dance are instances of *līlā*, but in this respect dance is superior to the *mahākāvya* at least, for the latter has a purpose and the former does not.

In the fourth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the sages whom Bharata is instructing in the *tāṇḍava* dance are puzzled by it. The purpose of acting is, they know, to reveal meaning, but dance is not necessarily related to the meaning of the song that accompanies it, nor indeed to any meaning at all. To this Bharata's reply is that 'Dance does not require any meaning. It has been created for the simple reason that it is beautiful. It is in the nature of things that all people find dancing beautiful.'[63]

Early on in his commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Abhinavagupta points out, 'The dance does not imitate anything in real life, but is a self-subsistent creation free from any practical aim. It is the natural expression, through the movements of the limbs, of a given state of mind.'[64] And as for Śiva, the archetypal dancer: 'The dance of Śiva is the natural expression of his complete and perfect bliss, free from all obstacles.'[65]

Even if Śiva dances *abhinaya*, mimetic dance, there are still no grounds for enquiry into the meaning of his dance, since dancing Śiva is all there really is:

[62] *Citramīmāṃsā*
upamaikā śailūṣī saṃprāptā citrabhūmikābhedān/
rañjayati kāvyaraṅge nṛtyantī tadvidāṃ cetaḥ//

[63] *Nāṭyaśāstra* 4.263 (trans. Masson and Patwardhan, *Aesthetic Rapture*, Vol. 1, p. 19):
-atrocyate na khalv artham kaṃcin nṛttam apekṣate
kiṃ tu śobhāṃ prajanayed iti nṛttaṃ pravartitam/
prāyeṇa sarvalokasya nṛttam iṣṭaṃ svabhāvataḥ//

[64] For all this paragraph I am indebted to Masson and Patwardhan, loc. cit. *Abhinavabhāratī* ed. Kavi. 2nd ed. Vol. 1, p. 21 (paraphrased R. Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta*, p. 66 fn. 3): nartanaṃ nṛttam gātrāṇām aṅgopāṅgānāṃ vilāsena kṣepo na tu kenacit kartavyāṃśena.

[65] *Abhinavabhāratī* loc. cit. (paraphrased Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience*): śaṅkarasya bhagavataḥ paripūrṇānandanirbharībhūtadehoccaladāntaranirvārasundarākārasya.

O beneficent Śiva!
every night you dance
with the whole range of *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras*,
yet, O lord!
there's nothing for you to imitate
but yourself,
for you pervade, you are, the entire universe.[66]

Philosophy reduces Śiva Naṭarāja to the notion of *spanda*, literally 'throbbing movement' but in fact a conflation of vibration, consciousness, and Śiva. The poem moves on from the dance to philosophy via a description of the mountain. After the interlude of the immobile mountain, unshaken by doomsday winds, we come in *sarga* 6 to the original movement:

When a particle of your power was intensely agitated,
O you whose form is more than the complete series of powers!
this world,
displaying its transient state,
arose,
composed of the three strands.[67]

. . .

When you shake,
māyā the secret place becomes grossness
and nature arises thence like coarse grass
and to produce the world
the *guṇas*, mutually dependent,
support each other like the strands of a rope.[68]

In *sarga* 2, the verses are by no means devoid of decorativeness, but the poet is as intent on Śiva as he can be while maintaining the usual manner of *kāvya*, and the *līlā* of Ratnākara's imagination more or less parallels the *līlā* of the dance. In *sarga* 6, however, after the parting shot, as it were, of the declaration that Śiva is fat and impotent (6.19), Ratnākara discards mannerism. Spring's comment at the end of his speech is also Ratnākara's:

[66] karaṇāṅgahāravidhibhiḥ savistaraiḥ sakalāsu śaṃkara niśāsu nṛtyatā/
kriyate tvayānukṛtir ātmano vibho sacarācaraṃ jagad avāpya tasthuṣaḥ//6.180//

[67] dadhato 'dhikāvikalaśaktimaṇḍalasthitirūpatāṃ prathitabhāvavikriyam/
tava śaktileśa idam uccakair jagat kṣubhite guṇatrayamayaṃ kilodabhūt//6.75//

[68] kṣubhite bhavaty avanitāṃ guhā gatā prakṛtiś ca balvajavad utthitā tataḥ/
jagadudbhavārtham itaretarāśrayastimitās ca rajjaguṇavad guṇāḥ sthitāḥ//6.80//

O lord! in this world
even the mental and verbal distinctions of the wise man
do not apply to you,
so I desist from my labours on beautiful verses
concerning a fraction of your qualities,
though I yearn to continue.[69]

It is Śiva as Parameśvara, beyond 'mental and verbal distinctions', who reduces Ratnākara to earnestness. (If *kāvya* is usually decorative, so too are the gods themselves, with their varied appendages of colour and form.) The hymn of praise to Parameśvara concludes the first part of the *Haravijaya*, the description of the status quo. In its final verses Śiva is informed of the depredations of the demon Andhaka. The poem is shaken out of its timelessness. The conclusion of Spring's speech is the *kṣobha*, the *spanda*, the vibration that sets off the expanding sequence of creation that is the rest of the poem.

The vibration which produces the universe is cognate with the resonance which produces speech. According to Śaiva esoterism, the production of the universe in the divine consciousness takes place through levels of speech. More than a score of verses in the *sarga* are concerned with speech as a cosmic principle. To begin with, Śiva's body is the *śabdabrahman* of Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*:

Verily, the word without beginning, middle or end,
manifestly itself in the form of all meanings,
that, they say, is your body,
the cause of the world,
everlasting,
the essence of the word that is Śiva.[70]

Śiva is *sphoṭa* (6.53–5), he is all meaning. Later we are told that the alphabet, basis of form in the world, comes forth from Śiva's mouth (6.113 and 114). Above all, the alphabet is the basis of *mantras* (6.114). Ratnākara is alluding to the *Yogasūtras* when he says that *praṇava, OM*, is expressive of Śiva alone (6.24). By

[69] sudhiyo'pi nātha matiśabdagocarās tvayi na sthitiṃ vidadhatīha kalpanāḥ// guṇaleśasūktiṣu yatas tato mayā satṛṣāpi tadvyavasitād viramyate//6.185//

[70] sakalārthavigrahatayā vivartate yad anādimadhyanidhanaṃ kilākṣaram/ prathayanti tat tava jagannibandhanaṃ śivaśabdatattvam avinaśvaraṃ vapuḥ// 6.55//

means of meditation on the *praṇava*, one's vital energy rises up the central canal, the *suṣumnā*, to reach the ultimate state of consciousness, which is nothing else than the unbeaten sound produced by Śiva (6.60). Śiva, indeed, is the *mantra*:

O adorable one!
you who are the master of the total energy of the *śaktis*,
without parents,
your permanent form consisting of the five *mantras*,
you create all the world,
you protect it and you destroy it.[71]

. . .

O adorable one,
the whole multitude of the *mantras* consists of you,
and all the gods consist of them.
Verily, in the threefold universe made of the three *guṇas*
there is nothing bereft of you.[72]

Sarasvatī playing her lute is of the same nature as Śiva (6.38). By means of the *mantra* Śiva grants release to mankind:

Nature, man, the *mantra OM*—
these three, O lord of the gods!
are like the well, bucket and rope.
Standing above without any form of organ
you firmly draw up the atomic soul.[73]

Śiva is the source of sound; he is also the source of light. He is the sun:

Manifestly only one
with many names,
yellow in form and radiant,

[71] tvam adhiṣṭhitāvikalaśaktimaṇḍalaḥ sakalaṃ jagat sṛjasi pāsi haṃsi ca/
sthirapañcamantramayavigrahasthitir jananadvayena bhagavan vinākṛtaḥ//6.79//
These five *mantras*, or *brahmamantras*, are the five names and aspects of Śiva: Iśāna, Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Vāma, and Sadyojāta. In 6.111, however Śiva is said to have pronounced the many sorts of *mantra* from his *four* mouths, which might be an allusion to now lost teachings of the Pāśupata Śaivas.

[72] bhavadātmakaṃ sakalamantramaṇḍalaṃ surasaṃhatiśca bhagavaṃs tadātmikā/
trividhe guṇatrayamaye jagaty aho na tad asti yat kila vinākṛtaṃ tvayā//6.156//

[73] prakṛtiḥ pumān praṇava ity amī trayaḥ suranātha kūpaghaṭarajjuvat sthitāḥ/
apakarṣasi tvam upari dṛḍhaṃ karaṇaprapañcarahito 'ṇum adbhutam//6.138//

> undertaking varied actions,
> making the days, seasons, half-years, years and so on,
> it is you alone who heat the world.[74]

Śiva is the Hiraṇyagarbha, gold from his toenails to his topknot (6.32); the fire of his consciousness is undiminished even at doomsday (6.88). It is Śiva who destroys the great darkness which holds men in bondage (6.164).

The imagery used in this hymn of praise is restrained and to the point, as in 6.138 (the well, bucket and rope). In 6.161 the soul's loss of animality (*paśutā*) in gaining Śivahood is aptly likened to the green banyan leaf fading to yellow: here the poet is not playing with colour. The straightforward utterance of philosophical truths ends with the statement that the atomic soul, when it escapes from its bonds, becomes like Śiva (6.170). For the last few verses, we are brought back from Parameśvara to the active and visible Śiva:

> At doomsday, the gaping circle of your southern mouth
> with coppery-red palate,
> avid solely for swallowing the world,
> is beautiful like the sun's gleaming disc
> when red-lotus red.[75]

Śiva's consciousness is undiminished even in the universal dissolution (6.88), but he is also the active cause of that dissolution. Having departed for most of the *sarga* from the usual dimension of *kāvya*, Ratnākara wishes to re-establish his hold on the medium and Śiva's image, and there is a résumé of Śiva's iconography and mythology before Andhaka is mentioned. The new moon on his head seems to have the glow of twilight, reddened by the jewels in the hoods of the snake that binds his matted locks (6.172). The crest moon's rays, pale above his third eye, seem to be the residue of Love's ashes (6.173). Śiva's form, real and illusory, is presented in a series of verses that culminates in devotion à la *kāvya*—the greater part of the hymn is fervent *jñāna*, but it then moves to almost nonchalant *bhakti*:

[74] sphuṭam eka eva vividhākhyatāṃ dadhad dharimūrtir āśritapṛthagvidhakriyaḥ/
jagatīṃ dinartvayanahāyanādikaṃ vidadhat tvam eva vitapasy abhīśumān//6.68//

[75] vivṛtaṃ jagatkavalanaikatṛṣṇaya tava tāmratālu mukhamaṇḍalaṃ kṣaye/
śriyam eti lagnaśatapattrapāṭalaṃ sphuradarkabimbam iva dakṣiṇāspadam//6.171//
Śiva is five-faced, a face to each of the four quarters and one looking upwards. The southern face is terrible and destroys all.

O Śiva the Destroyer!
when they bow down
and, reflected in the mirror
of the toe-nails of your lotus-feet,
are made tiny,
the throngs of gods and demons
‹acquire all-surpassing greatness›/
‹learn your all-surpassing greatness›.[76]

Though people bow down, bending low,
at your lotus-feet,
before you who protect the world with its gods and demons,
like the flame of a fire
they certainly will never go downwards.[77]

Kāvya needs excitement—contradiction, punning, and witty comment, as here; but then back to the calm of the earlier philosophical heights, for a moment:

O you whose form is beyond
the scope of mental and verbal distinctions!
glory to you,
supreme soul
embodied in the sacrificer, earth,
water, wind, fire, the sun, the sky,
and the moon![78]

It is to Śiva, the unborn, the unchanging, that the gods have come for protection (6.187). All-knowing Śiva is reminded that he gave birth to a demon, and it is pointed out to him that this demon is now oppressing the world. The poem here turns from the eternal state of things to the temporal. Order is shown to be disorder, at a lower level. If one god is in his heaven, the other gods have been expelled from theirs.

The way *kāvya* selects from myth is evidenced by Ratnākara's treatment of Andhaka. In the Purāṇas, Andhaka is adopted by Pārvatī as her son; blinded by lust, he attempts to make love to his 'mother', but thwarted by a hundred illusory Pārvatīs, he is

[76] tava pādapadmanakhadarpaṇodarapratibimbitair api laghūkṛtātmabhiḥ/ adhigamyate hara mahattvam ānataiḥ sakalātiśāyi suradaityamaṇḍalaiḥ//6.182//

[77] sasurāsurasya jagataḥ śaraṇyatāṃ bhavato gatasya caraṇāmbujadvayam/ janatā namaty avanatāpi kutracid dhruvam āśuśukṣaṇiśikheva naity adhaḥ//6.183//

[78] kṣititoyamārutakṛśānubhānumadgaganāmṛtāṃśuyajamānamūrtaye/ bhavate matidhvanivikalpagocaravyativṛttarūpa paramātmane namaḥ//6.184//

finally 'purified by means of Śiva's third eye and is himself given a third eye, the outward manifestation of his inner enlightenment.'[79] The *Harivaṃśa* version of the myth tones it down by substituting a desire for the wishing-tree in Śiva's heaven in place of lust for 'mother' Pārvatī. Ratnākara's rewriting is more thorough: the demon Hiraṇyākṣa to whom the blind creature is given is provided by Ratnākara with a wife, Manoramā, who fondles Andhaka on her lap (6.191). There is thus no question of Pārvatī being considered the 'mother' here. Far from Andhaka coming to Śiva's home with designs on Pārvatī, the demon in the *Haravijaya* shows no wish to meddle with Siva until the envoy is sent to him. Even when angered by the envoy, with regard to Pārvatī he merely remarks that she will be lonely when he has driven her out of Śiva's body by slaying Śiva (35.1).

Moreover, Andhaka, far from envying his father's domestic felicity, pours scorn upon it:

> What this envoy of Śiva's has said
> so coolly,
> is just like a child.
> All that sort of thing can be said
> in ‹one's father's house›/‹a grave yard›
> where ‹mother›/‹the Mātṛs› will listen eagerly.[80]

[79] O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism* p. 192; in addition to her treatment of the Andhaka myth in this work (pp. 190–2), O'Flaherty's more recent remarks in *Hindu Myths* (Penguin, 1975) are important, and may be cited here: 'Skanda and Gaṇeśa are sons of Śiva whose birth is desired by some of the gods but feared by others (notably Indra). This ambivalence is even more marked toward other sons of Śiva who actually become demons, enemies of the gods. Of all these sons, Gaṇeśa alone is physically connected with Pārvatī (though even he is not born from her in the 'natural' manner); Jalandhara and Andhaka are demons engendered by the fire of Śiva's third eye (like the mare) and are thus only 'adopted' by Pārvati (as Skanda is). Both demons seek, unsuccessfully, to win Pārvatī from Śiva, just as Gaṇeśa sometimes competes with Śiva for Pārvatī. In the myth of Jalandhara, this ambiguous relationship between Pārvatī and her 'son' is slurred over, but in the myth of Andhaka it is clearly emphasized. These myths, in which Śiva opposes an incestuous relationship between mother and 'son' by injuring his own 'son', may also be seen as inversions of the myth of Rudra and Prajāpatī in which Rudra opposes an incestuous relationship between father and daughter by injuring his own father' (p. 168 f.). In the *Haravijaya* there is none of this. Śiva is affectionate to Gaṇeśa (2.17; see above, pp. 242 ff.); Pārvati is the only maternal woman (see above, p. 187); and Śiva's cutting off of Brahmā's head (1.43: 8.8) is entirely devoid of motive, as far as Ratnākara is concerned.

[80] yad bālabhāvasulabhaṃ śaśalakṣmamauli-
dūto'bhyadhād ayam aśaṅkitacittavṛttiḥ/
vaktuṃ kṣamaṃ pitṛgṛhe tad aśeṣam eva
śrotāsti yatra rabhasena sa mātṛvargaḥ//35.13//

There is some irony in this dismissal of the Mothers (Mātṛs), for one of their number, Cāmuṇḍā, emaciated and insatiably thirsty, drinks up the blood from Andhaka's death wound (50.88).[81]

Both Śiva and Viṣṇu feature at length in the remarkable speech of Prabhāmaya, already mentioned in Chapter 6. In response to the first speech, which was Kālamusala's call for immediate war against the demon, Prabhāmaya portrays the great gods as remote from their, the *gaṇas*' situation—policy will be their salvation. Working towards this conclusion he describes in blocks of verses the joint form of Śiva and Viṣṇu; the fire of doomsday, which sprinkles ash on Śiva; the churning of the ocean to produce nectar, with Viṣṇu holding the mountain churning-stick, and Śiva swallowing the poison that is a by-product; Śiva's destruction of Tripura, the demon city, with Viṣṇu as his arrow; Śiva's burning up Kāma and Time. These terrific scenes seem to be employed by Prabhāmaya as a back-cloth to his argument.

The next divine scene is one of great structural significance. The central episode, the jewel in the middle of the necklace, is the merging of Śiva and Pārvatī described in *sarga* 21. This event is separated from his followers' preoccupations, by descriptions of sunset (*sarga* 19) and moonrise (*sarga* 20) beforehand, and the description of the ocean (*sarga* 22) afterwards. At the beginning of *sarga* 21 Śiva describes the moonrise to Pārvatī; he then becomes intent upon his evening rites (21.22). His heart rejoicing, he salutes the evening (21.23).

As he mutters his prayers, the rays of his teeth make it seem that Gaṅgā had entered through the hole in his head and was pouring out through his mouth (21.24). A striking reversal of the religious, that is to say yogic, fact: the light of enlightenment is emitted from the hole in the top of the head (*brahmarandhra*), a detail Kālidāsa refers to in his account of meditating Siva (*Kumārasaṃbhava* 3.49).

His eyes half closed in meditation, the fiery third eye seems to

[81] By so doing she prevents his blood reaching the ground where it is magically able to produce new Andhakas. According to the usual Purāṇic version of the myth, the Mātṛs originate specifically to deal with Andhaka's blood, each of the principal gods providing a female emanation. However, Ratnākara is in agreement with the major sculptural representation of Andhaka's death—that in Cave 15 at Ellora. Hermann Kulke remarks that this sculpture is one of the most terrifying to be found in Indian art (*Cidambaramāhātmya*, Wiesbaden, 1970, p. 56 fn. 62).

paint on the forehead the mark of the Śaivite sectary (21.25). But while Śiva meditates (21.25–8) Pārvatī's eyes are reddened with rage (21.29), and she pants angrily (21.30). His rites completed, he soothes her (21.31) and gives her wine to drink (21.32). As always, with her bud-like lower lip and rosy cheek, she delighted Śiva's heart (21.33).

Pārvatī, seeing a lonely sheldrake duck, parted from its mate by the night, besought Śiva for a place in his body (21.34). He too fears separation, and has her enter half his body (21.35). To begin with, Pārvatī is not freed from stress: with only one hand, how can she show her submission to Śiva; and Gaṅgā, though cold, will, out of envy, burn her (21.36). So she is momentarily discouraged (21.37). The description of the joint form immediately follows. The crest moon has to move over to the right-hand side of Śiva's crest, but is alarmed by the hisses of his serpent chaplet (21.38). His upper eye, half invisible, seems like the morning sun partially swallowed by Rāhu, demon of eclipses (21.39). Tensions continue to ebb and flow. The eyes of both halves are closed, for the lotus-face of the beloved can now be beheld only in imagination (21.40). The forehead is furrowed as the eyes try to see the other side (21.41). Pārvatī's pupil traverses her long eye with difficulty because she does not see her lover's face (21.42). The betel streak in the middle of the lower lip marks their dividing line (21.43). That Pārvatī's breast within Śiva's body enjoys his touch is signified by her closed eye (21.44). Her belly, as if angry at her thinness that prevented her completely penetrating the other half of Śiva's body, seems to frown under the guise of the three folds of skin (21.45). Her buttock extended in the bliss of merging with her lover, Pārvatī's jewelled girdle falls down, its string snapped (21.46). Pārvatī, joined with Śiva, surpasses the beauty of all other women (21.47). On Śiva's side the girdle is a snake, black as a stream of *kālakūṭa* from his neck (21.48). On Pārvatī's side the jewelled girdle tinkles like a line of geese on the hip that is a sandbank of the river of beauty (21.49). On Śiva's thigh the dappled deerskin resembled the dark fortnight come with the stars to view the moon on his crest (21.50). The diaphanous garment on Pārvatī's thigh, coloured by the gems on her girdle, shone like a rainbow (21.51). The jingling of Pārvatī's anklet seemed to express the wish of her foot that their union should be prolonged (21.52).

The snake that formed Śiva's anklet resembled Śeṣa in wishing that Śiva would not crush its hood-jewel when he danced (21.53). The reflection on Śiva's chest of the full moon come to honour him seems to be the manifestation of Pārvatī's breast hidden within (21.54).

> The body of Śiva and Pārvatī,
> undivided, ever thus displayed its beauty—
> ‹celebrating the evening›/‹delighting in their union›,
> beautiful with
> ‹the king of snakes for girdle-string›/
>   ‹an excellent girdle-string›,
> the face
> ‹having the dread third eye›/
>   ‹giving many sidelong looks›,
> ‹characterized by the excellent digit of the moon›/
>   ‹adorned with garments of invincible majesty›.[82]

They ceased to move, and silently of one mind they experienced the happiness of mutual love (21.56).

> Moon-crested Śiva
> intent on making something new
> like a poet «writing» a play
> thus «placed» in half his body half of Pārvatī
> ‹who is resourceful in arousing passion›/
>   ‹wherein *rasa* is fostered and the protagonist makes his resolve›,
> ‹her character unaltered»/
>   ‹including the hero's style of procedure›,
> the abode of ‹good qualities›/‹the poetic excellences›
> ‹the characteristics of her beautiful limbs renowned›/
> ‹with the fine and well-known dramatic characteristics and subdivisions of the opening›,
> ‹joined to him›/‹provided with the junctures of the plot›
> —he had ‹a woman›/‹joy› in his heart.[83]

[82] saṃdhyāhitotsavavikāsam ahīnakāñcī-
dāmābhirāmam aniśaṃ vikaṭākṣavaktram/
lakṣmīm anuttamahimāṃśukalāñchitaṃ sad-
āviścakāra śivayor vapur ity abhinnam//21.55//

[83] iti rasapoṣayuktimad anujjhitavṛtti guṇavyapāśrayaṃ
prathitaśubhāṅgalakṣaṇam apūrvakṛtipravaṇātmatāṃ dadhat/
kavir iva nāṭakaṃ ghaṭitasaṃdhi vidhāya śaśāṅkaśekharaḥ
śikharisutārdham ardhavapuṣi pramadānvitamānaso'bhavat//21.57//

The *sarga* ends with the *gaṇas* in wide-eyed wonder at Śiva and Pārvatī (21.58).

The *sarga* appropriately includes at its close the two punning verses (21.55 and 57) just cited, for the joint form of Śiva and Pārvatī may be said to be the divine model for the pun. At the same time there is the carefully worked out analogy to drama, as in the poem's second invocatory verse.

The merging of Śiva and Pārvatī is described in the usual manner, with limbs, ornaments, and clothing invested with a life of their own. Each verse is autonomous: eyes are closed tc visualize the beloved (21.39); the eyes are open, straining to see (21.40–1); the girdle which falls in 21.46 is back in place for 21.49. The description is not naturalistic, yet it is vivid and tense, and succeeds in effectively presenting the divine image.

The Pārvatī who is Śiva's beautiful wife is, if not enshrined, then at least safely ensconced in the centre of the poem, in the middle of the pleasure sequence, far from any thought of the demon foe. However, it is her dread form, Caṇḍī, who is to provide the penultimate major divine episode of the poem. The Mothers, frightening creatures, are prominent in Śiva's battle array (e.g. in *sargas* 39, 40 and 43); and when their chief, Caṇḍī, takes the field at the close of *sarga* 46, she inspires a hymn of praise that takes up the following *sarga*.

As in *sarga* 6, a heightened awareness of the divine intrudes into the standard matter of *kāvya*. But the tone and texture in *sarga* 47 is far more emotional and vivid than that of the hymn to Śiva, appropriately, since the audience or council chamber is now replaced by the turmoil of the battlefield. The core of this hymn to Caṇḍī is a Śākta theology more recondite and more specific in its terms than was the philosophy in *sarga* 6. The theology is flanked at the beginning and end of the *sarga* by detailed references to the public form of the goddess, and is introduced by a long sequence of verses (thirty-two) in praise of *OṂ*, which is her mouth (6.92).

It is the goddess's power that is manifested in the victory of all great warriors (47.3). Her howling alone puts the foe to flight (47.5). Dwelling in her cave in the Vindhya mountain, she receives offerings of flesh from her devotees (47.11). Since she dwells there the Vindhya is higher than the seven worlds (47.8). At doomsday she is herself gigantic in the extreme. Taking on

her dreadful Bhairava form, she picks up the world, Brahmā's egg as her conch, knocking a hole in it to make a mouthpiece, and filling it full with the wind of her breath (47.12). When she manifests hereself as Kālarātri, all the bones of the inhabitants of the seven worlds are not sufficient in quantity to adorn her huge and dreadful limbs (47.13). The top half of Brahmā's egg is her bell, with Mount Meru, the golden mountain, as its clapper (47.15). The ashes of the seven worlds are inadequate to provide the sectarian mark on her forehead (47.17). Brahmā's egg with the seven oceans within is her water-vessel (47.21). Her garland of skulls seems to be the mountain chains reduced to clinker (47.25). Viṣṇu's discus fills one ear lobe, Mount Meru dangles from the other (47.21).

Whereas an ordinary woman is a lute who requires the lover's fingers to sound (1.9), Caṇḍī is the player, and Mount Meru and the moon form her instrument, with Śeṣa for the string (47.19). She is carefree, for doomsday is her festival, and she sings as she plays the lute that is the moon with moonbeams for its strings (47.29). Nevertheless, she and Śiva are several times referred to as being in love: implicitly, she here does not surpass him. She feels affection for the sword she wields, since it is the same colour as his blue throat (47.5).

> Moon-crested Śiva, deeply in love,
> presented half his body to you,
> but you, without any reservation,
> gave your whole heart to him.[84]

In keeping with the emotionalism of the *sarga*, Śiva rises to unusual heights of passion:

> On account of the burning pangs of love
> when he thought of your unparalleled form,
> Moon-crested Śiva released hot sighs
> like flames from the mass of *kālakūṭa* poison
> drawn from its place in his throat.[85]

[84] ardhaṃ śaśāṅkaśakalābharaṇena gāḍha-
rāgopagūḍhamanasā vapuṣo'rpitaṃ te/
niḥśeṣam eva hṛdayaṃ punar avyalīka-
mānopaghātaghaṭanaṃ didiśe tvayāsmai//47.35//

[85] saṃcintya rūpam atūlaṃ tava puṣpaketu-
dāhānutāpavaśataḥ śvasitoṣṇavātān/
ākṛṣṭakaṇṭhakakuharāspadakālakūṭa-
kūṭānalān iva mumoca mṛgāṅkamauliḥ//47.9//

Her love is jealous. The courtyard of her cave, splashed with the blood of the animals offered to her, seems to be full of so many twilights, *saṃdhyās*, held captive by her on account of her anger at Śiva's obeisance to them (47.43). The Gaṅgā, positioned on Śiva's matted locks, dries up at Vāsuki's hisses, as he encircles Śiva, affords her satisfaction (47.37). But these references to her relationship with Śiva are only incidental.

Caṇḍī is above all a terrifying goddess in the first part of the *sarga* and a saviour goddess in the last part, but with something of each aspect in both. Thus,

> Your courtyard on the Mekala mountain,
> where lines of bees alight
> on flower offerings from every heavenly being,
> seems to be strewn with iron chains—
> the fetters of worldly existence—
> which you have struck off your devotees.[86]

Devotion to her is a sharp axe edge—it fells the limitless forest of *saṃsāra* (47.31). It is, perhaps, a slip due to the poet's mounting enthusiasm that there is one early technical reference to the theology or theosophy of the middle part of the *sarga*. Having visualized the goddess at doomsday, scooping up all the heaving waters of the seven oceans in her long fingernails (47.27), Ratnākara inserts arcane instruction:

> O moon-faced lady! he attains Śaṅkara-hood
> who, giving no thought to fear of the dart of severe sorrow,
> meditates on you
> as clasped to the heart of Bhairava
> at the radiating hub
> of the bright circle of the Yogeśvarīs.[87]

The first part of the *sarga* clearly ends with the supposition of twilights captive in Caṇḍī's courtyard. This attribution of

[86] sadmajiraṃ tava nabhaścaracakravāla-
puṣpopakāranipatanmadhupāvalīkam/
vicchinnabhaktabhavabandhanalohapāśa-
jālāvakīrṇam iva rājati mekalādrau//47.10//

Mekala is a mountain in the Vindhyas.

[87] yogeśvarīruciracakrakarālanābhi-
baddhāsthabhairavahṛdaṅkagatāṃ janas tvām/
dhyāyann asaṃkalitasaṃkaṭaśokaśaṅku-
śaṅkaḥ śaśāṅkamukhi śaṅkaratām upaiti//47.28//

malevolent power to the jealous goddess is immediately followed by the declaration that all spiritual knowledge sprang from her, like the wish-fulfilling creepers from Mount Meru (47.44). Thereafter she is said to be the supreme truth of Buddhist, Jain, and other systems; and at the same time—ultimate orthodoxy—the *praṇava OṂ*, described over thirty-two verses, is her mouth! The preamble of the theological section is now concluded, and Ratnākara feels at last free to refer to the *śākta* mysticism to which, as we shall see, he might well himself have subscribed, and of which we have just above seen an preliminary instance, yet to be explicated.

Those who have adopted the Kaula path
contemplate you in your Bhairava form,
you who are the light of appearance,
who function without faculties and senses,
receiving and making the chalice-offering of all limited phenomena,
the establishment of the primal *haṃsa* phoneme,
the form of the sixteen *vīras*
who are the gurus beginning with Śrīkaṇṭha,
having as your seat the expanded lotuses of your powers,
you who have manifested by your three powers
the prongs of the trident to Śiva,
who with your brilliance make manifest all worlds,
who are the totality of the supreme nectar
overflowing with the waves of creation.[88]

Surely you are the sole cause
of shattering the powers of differentiated perception,
you who are subtle,
whose substance is eternal,
whose vast fire soars from the three prongs
and overpowers the subsidiary solar rays.[89]

[88] jyotirmayīm akaraṇendriyavṛttim ādya-
haṃsākṣarathitimayīṃ vihitāmayārghyām/
śrīkaṇṭhamukhyaguruṣoḍaśavīramūrtim
utphullaśaktikamalāsanatām upetām//47.96//

śaktitrayaprathitaśūlakarāṃ śivāya
dhāmnā jaganti sakalāny avabhāsayantīm/
kallolasaṃkulaparāmṛtasampadaṃ tvāṃ
dhyāyanti bhairavatanuṃ kila kaulikāsthāḥ//47.97//

For the translation and exposition of 47, 96–9, I am indebted to Alexis Sanderson.

[89] pratyaṅgasaṃgatapataṅgakarābhibhāvi-
koṭitrayonnataviśaṅkaṭatigmahetiḥ/

Having contemplated you here
in your two modes, supreme and lower:
enthroned on the beautiful pericarps
of the lotuses resting on the tips of
of the *trident within the circle;*
in Bhairava's permanent embrace—
we Kaulas attain the mastery of powers.[90]

It is celestial beings, *siddhas* and *sādhyas*, who pronounce this *sarga* of praise (47.1), but by the expression *jano 'yam* Ratnākara may also refer to himself.

The Kaula path is a secret teaching which is a variety of Tantra. Ratnākara gives details which properly were available only to the initiated. Both in this sequence of verses and in the earlier verse (47.28) the goddess is to be mediated upon in a highly specific manner. One is to centre oneself on the centre of the circle or on the tips of the trident.

If I read it aright, the last of this sequence of verses refers to both forms of meditation, the goddess on the trident being the supreme form, and in Bhairava's embrace her lower form. The trident is, I think, within the circle of Śiva's navel, and he is thus clearly inferior to the goddess. In the latter mode, as Bhairava and Bhairavī, as undifferentiated consciousness (*prakāśa*) and self-awareness (*vimarśa*), they are so to speak equals.

'The bright circle of the Yogeśvarīs' (47.28) has at its centre Śiva and Pārvatī, Bhairava and Bhairavī. We cannot but compare the *Haravijaya* itself with the divine couple in its centre, though the comparison can be taken no further. The Yogeśvarīs, otherwise the Mātṛs, are a person's intellect and senses—the turning of their circle constitutes the experience of beings. For the ordinary person, this circle of his own energies is the wheel of time and of suffering. By self-identification with the centre, one becomes master of the encircling powers, and ultimately, one becomes Śiva (Śaṅkara).

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sūkṣmā sanātanatanuś ca nanu tvam eva
    māyākalāsu śakalīkaraṇaikahetuḥ//47.98//

[90] cakrāśritatriśikhakoṭigatāravinda-
    satkarṇikāsanagatām iha kaulikas tvām/
dhyātvaiti śaktipatitāṃ sthirabhairavāṅka-
    vṛttiṃ parāparavibhedavatīṃ jano'yam//47.99//

Positioned above the trident the goddess is supreme. The trident rises from the navel of Śiva as corpse, lifeless since he is separated from his energy, his *śakti*, the goddess. The three prongs represent desire which is creation, knowledge which is preservation, and action which is destruction. Above the prongs are three lotuses representing the three highest subtle energies of a *mantra*. Above the lotuses is the fourth subtle energy, transcendent speech, and on top of that sits the goddess. The energies are the goddess's, hers the power.

In this supreme mode, she is Bhairava, the light of appearance (47.96): she is undifferentiated consciousness (*prakāśa*). To her one sacrifices objects and senses into the fire of consciousness, and ultimately one's own identity; this process is continued by the goddess, who sacrifices herself into her own nature. Thus Ratnākara says that she is 'receiving and making the chalice-offering of all limited phenomena (*āmaya*)'. The goddess is the primal phoneme, *haṃsa*, or rather the energy that underlies the phonic breath.[91] She takes form in the heroes (*vīras*) who are the gurus. She is 'the totality of the supreme nectar overflowing with the waves of creation', for the goddess in Kaula worship is fuller than the full moon, the seventeenth lunar phase, the radical source of emanation.

After this high point the theology becomes progressively more general, though not without obscure references, until the precise and detailed Kaula imagery becomes vague and almost bland in this beautiful verse:

> Imagining you enthroned amid the lotus of the sky,
> within the full moon its pericarp,
> and showering down nectar,
> your devotee quickly surpasses death.[92]

This links well with the following verse, wherein the *haṭha*-yogic technique of bending back the tongue to produce abundant saliva (*amṛta*, nectar), that is, the position called *khecarīmudrā*, is

[91] See André Padoux, *Recherches sur la Symbolique et l'Énergie de la Parole dans certains Textes tantriques* (Paris, 1963), p. 121.

[92] vistāraśāliśaśimaṇḍalakarṇikāṅka-
tārāpathāmburuhamadhyakṛtapratiṣṭhām/
tvāṃ cintayann amṛtavṛṣṭim ivākirantīm
atyeti sādhakajanaḥ sahasaiva mṛtyum//47.134//

spoken of as drinking at the goddess's breast. Here ends the middle section of the *sarga*.

The third and final section moves to a crescendo of beneficence. She is the submarine fire at doomsday, turning the oceans to ashes (47.136); she is each of the seven Mātṛs (47.137–5); ending with Vārāhī, who when she dives into the ocean hides the sun with her snout but illumines the sky with the rays from her tusks. Her form is frightful, but her heart compassionate (47.156). The iron shackles of those who remember her lotus feet turn into jewelled anklets (47.157). For the devotees of the goddess, the pounding ocean becomes a sapphire causeway (47.158); fire becomes the red coral tree (47.159); wild elephants run the other way (47.160); nocturnal demons become friendly (47.161); lions do not harm (47.162); nor snakes (47.163); brigands turn into friends and protectors (47.164).

> So, hail to you who in your great magnanimity
> beyond measure infatuate and enlighten the world,
> to you Caṇḍikā, who soothe
> the eyes of Indra surrounded by the foe.[93]
>
> Thus we desist from your praise,
> through the draining of our powers
> not, O blessed lady!
> through any lack of inclination.
> Whose tongue, tasting drops of nectar,
> loses its taste for them?[94]

The final scene of the poem is of course Śiva's, but his triumph, his *vijaya*, is soon described. Most of the fiftieth *sarga* is concerned with the give and take of his duel with Andhaka. But when Śiva breaks his bowstring and takes up his trident, Andhaka's fate is sealed. As Śiva whirls it round in the sky, the three blazing prongs form a threefold solar disc (50.71), upsetting

[93] itthaṃ pramāviṣayalaṅghi laghutvam ukta-
māhātmyamohitavibodhitaviṣṭapāyai/
tubhyaṃ namaḥ pratibalāvalitāmarendra-
dṛṣṭiprasādanakṛte nanu caṇḍikāyai//47.165//

[94] itthaṃ stutes tava vayaṃ viratāḥ svaśakti-
śūnyatvato na bhagavaty abhilāṣabhaṅgāt/
āsvādayanty amṛtaśīkarabinduvarṣam
abhyeti kasya rasanā virasām avasthām//47.166//

earth, ocean, and heavenly bodies (50.72), dislocating Meru's peaks (50.73), inundating the sky with the ocean's waves (50.74), melting the boulders on the golden Mount Meru (50.75), drying up the milky way (50.76). Śiva himself emits a great flame from his mouth (50.77). Andhaka's arrows darken the sky, but the flaming trident burns them up, as the submarine fire does the ocean waves (50.78). Śiva strikes the demon with the razor-sharp trident and gives a horrifying yell; Andhaka distresses him with terrible missiles, but the fire from the trident only increases (50.79). Holding his great trident, Śiva charges the demon's chariot; the demon hits him with his club (50.80). His head bleeding from this blow, fire flashes from Śiva's mouth and burns up the demon's chariot; along with its horses, standard, charioteer, and wheels (50.81).

> Then when that chariot had been burned up like Tripura
> by the fire with its encircling flames
> reddening the whole sky,
> the demon lord, in his arrogance
> intending to seize his moon crest
> energetically leapt into the air.[95]
>
> Cheeks wreathed in a smile,
> as he hurtled towards him
> Śiva the Trident-bearer
> impaled him on his trident
> and along with him
> the hearts of all his demon mistresses.[96]

Blood streams from the demon's chest (50.84). As the steamy smoke rises up the sun seems to bleed (50.85).

> The thick blood which flowed from
> the demon's chest pierced by the trident

[95] kapiśitadaśadigbhir vahninā heticakrais
tripura iva tadānīṃ syandane tena dagdhe/
śiśirakarakirīṭaṃ daityanātho jighṛkṣuḥ
sarabhasam atha darpād utpapātāntarikṣam//50.82//

[96] smitavikasitagaṇḍabhittibhāgas
tam abhimukhaṃ guruvegam āpatantam/
samam abhinad aśeṣadaityakāntā-
janahṛdayais triśikhena śūlapāṇiḥ//50.83//

soothed all the worlds
scorched by the fire of his might.[97]

Lifted aloft, impaled on the prongs of the trident,
in mid air,
the colour of a heap of collyrium powder,
the armies of the foe saw him
as a cloud in the sky portending
the destruction of the demon race's fortune.[98]

Cāmuṇḍā drank up the thick blood
as it fell from his chest into her bowl,
her red body looking permeated with blood;
the seeds and sprouts of his virility,
his replicas in continuous succession,
she quickly killed,
crushing them between her fingertips.[99]

Watched intently by the gods and demons all around,
his abundant blood
sizzling in the flames of the trident's fire,
his entire body was burned to ashes;
then suddenly
its light entered the body
of Śiva whose crest is the crescent moon.[100]

Then he who had swallowed the Andhaka *kālakūṭa*
in the ocean of battle
in which the hosts of gods and demons
had suffered,
showed to Indra

[97] sasyande triśikhavidāritāt surārer
yadvakṣaḥkaṭakataṭād asṛkchaṭāmbhaḥ/
viśveṣām akuruta tatpratāpavahni-
pluṣṭānām api jagatāṃ tad eva śāntim//50.86//

[98] triśikhamukhavibhedād añjanakṣodapuñja-
cchavir avanim amuñcad vyomasīmny ardyamānaḥ/
gaganabhuvi sa evālokyatārātisainyair
ditisutakulalakṣmīsaṃkṣayotpātameghaḥ//50.87//

[99] tadvakṣaḥkaṭakād asṛṅnipatitaṃ sāndraṃ kapālodare
pītvā tatpariṇāmapāṭalam ivātāmraṃ vapur bibhratī/
cāmuṇḍāṅgulikoṭibhāgamalanāt tadvīryabījāṅkurān
acchinnākhilasaṃtatīn sarabhasaṃ cakre praticchandakān//50.88//

[100] triśikhadahanajvālātāpakvathadbahalāsṛjaḥ
sapadi vapuṣas tasyāśeṣāt kṛtād atha bhasmasāt/
stimitanayanavrātair dṛṣṭaṃ surāsuramaṇḍalaiḥ
śaśidharakalāmaulerjyotiḥ śarīram athāviśat//50.89//

the Fortune of his kingdom
seated on his shoulder
and fanned by the chowries
the Maruts waved.[101]

At his command
in the quarters from which all the foes' troops had been expelled
the Lokapālas, wide-eyed with joy,
quickly in due order took up their respective positions,
as before, to protect them.[102]

He brought back to life free from wounds
the soldiers fallen on the field of battle
struck down by the armies of the foe
by the touch of his hand
anointing them with the nectar
flowing from his crescent-moon crest.[103]

In every quarter the *siddhas* and *sādhyas*, heavenly beings,
delighted by the death of the foe,
scattered showers of flowers
that perfumed the sky
and intoxicated bees with their nectar;
with new songs accompanied by many instruments
they sang his praises.[104]

In the sky the heavenly nymphs sang a festive hymn,
their full breasts heaving
and shaking their necklaces
as high note alternated with low,
making very plain

[101] grāsīkṛtārditasurāsuracakravāla-
saṅgrāmasāgaragatāndhakakālakūṭaḥ/
nirdhūtacāmaramarutparivījitāṃsa-
pīṭhe dideśa haraye'tha sa rājyalakṣmīm//50.90//

[102] unmūlitākhilavipakṣagaṇāsu tūrṇam
asyājñayā pura ivāmaralokapālāḥ/
dikṣu kramād atha yathāyatham eva gupti-
hetoḥ sthitiṃ pramadaphulladṛśo babandhuḥ//50.91//

[103] nipatitam arisainyābhyāhataṃ saṃyugorvyāṃ
nijakaraparimarśān niṣprahāravraṇaṃ saḥ/
śaśiśakalakirīṭasyandamānāmṛtāmbhaḥ-
srutikṛtapariṣekaṃ jīvayām āsa sainyam//50.92//

[104] diśi diśi makarandasyandamādyaddvirephāḥ
surabhitaghanamārgāḥ puṣpavṛṣṭīḥ kirantaḥ/
pratinavamukharāgānekavāditraghoṣās
tam ahitavadhatuṣṭās tuṣṭuvuḥ siddhasādhyāḥ//50.93//

the great yearnings of their hearts
with unceasing and varied movements of the brow.[105]

Then, when he had granted their boons
and honoured those gods and *gaṇa*-lords
who had shown their devotion in battle
and shook loose the gems in their diadems
as they now bent low their heads in reverence,
he dwelt happily in his own city
with his queen in dignity.[106]

Here the myth which flourishes in the Purāṇas is muted. Above all, it is Andhaka who is reduced in significance in the *Haravijaya*. The poem concludes with Śiva returning to his city like any other king who has killed an upstart rival. He dispenses rewards and honours to his tributaries, and retires with dignity to his life of pleasures. Ratnākara might well have been referring back to the great days of Lalitāditya and Jayāpīḍa, to the great triumphs of Kashmiri arms. Cippaṭa too should aspire to such dignity (*anubhāva*) (50.95). The myth is stripped to the bare minimum, I suggest, to allow this element of political allegory. In itself, Andhaka's lust for Pārvatī is too specific to allow general application to the strategic situation in India; and also it is a most effective prelude to his subsequent purging of his sins. In the Purāṇic version, all is forgiven; in the reality to which *mahākāvya* has implicit reference, all that is desired is that the usurper die.

It is certainly true, and not irrelevant, that the Purāṇas put the myth to good literary effect. Thus the *Kūrma Purāṇa*'s account of the end of Andhaka:

> ... Andhaka, tortured and blinded by lust, came to Mount Mandara in order to carry off the goddess, daughter of the mountain ... Then the lord, the Rudra of the doomsday fire, the refuge of the good, took Andhaka and placed him on the tip of his trident and began to dance ... When Andhaka was fixed on the tip of the trident, all his

[105] jagur amarataruṇyo maṅgalaṃ tāramandra-
kramataralitahārotkampipīnastanāgrāḥ/
aviratavividhabhrūbhaṅgasaṃlakṣyamāṇa-
sphuṭataragurucctovāsanā nākamārge//50.94//

[106] tridaśagaṇapatīṃs tān viślathanmauliratna-
praṇatinataśiraskān saṃyuge dṛṣṭabhaktīn/
abhimatavaralābhaiḥ so'tha saṃbhāvya devyā
saha sukham anubhāvāt svāṃ purīm adhyatiṣṭhat//50.95//

sins were burnt away, and he obtained perfect knowledge and praised the highest lord ... The highest lord was pleased with this praise and took Andhaka down from the tip of his trident and touched him with his two hands and said, 'Your praise has throughly pleased me, demon. You will become a leader of my hosts and dwell with me as a follower of the lord Nandin, honoured even by the gods, free from disease or misery, and all your doubts will be dispelled.' As soon as the god of gods had said this, the gods saw that the great demon Andhaka had become a leader of hosts in the presence of the god, shining like a thousand suns, three-eyed, bearing the moon, blue-necked, with matted locks, carrying a trident, with an enormous body ...

Then Hara took the son of Hiraṇyalocana ('golden-eye') by the hand and went to the place where the daughter of the mountain, the darling of the lord, was waiting. She saw her husband arrive to dispel the pain of her heart, and she received Andhaka pleasantly and graciously. When Andhaka saw the great empress at the side of the god, he prostrated himself on the ground and bowed to her lotus feet and praised her ... The blessed goddess was pleased with the lord of demons as he praised her, bent low in devotion, and she accepted Andhaka as her own son.[107]

For the Purāṇas, the scenario is domestic in its end as in its beginning, the domesticity apparent by contrast with the *Haravijaya*. The accident of Andhaka's untoward birth had seemed to lead to family tragedy, but thanks to the father's grace and the son's contrition the conclusion is a family reunion.

As for Andhaka in himself, his lot is a hard one, the myth profound. Kramrisch states it well.

Andhaka, of divine origin, had been destined to lead a tortured life of demonic lust, power, passion, rejection, ascetic self-destruction, and longing for divine vision and the perfect woman, the Mother of the Universe who had abandoned him. Though he lived in darkness, divine vision and the Mother of the Universe were his by birth. Obsessed by demonic, unconsciously incestuous desire, he drove himself to his own defeat; his death was a purification by Śiva, who had willed his redemption and return to his origin.[108]

All this is too much for *kāvya* to handle.

That Ratnākara did know the Purāṇic version of Andhaka's end is shown by his brief allusion to a striking feature of the

[107] O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, pp. 172 ff.

[108] Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva* (Princeton, 1981), p. 383.

myth, namely that on receiving his final blow from Śiva, Andhaka's blood drops turn into innumerable replicas of the demon. Cāmuṇḍā then collects the falling blood in her cup, and those that are shooting up from already fallen drops she crushes between her fingertips (50.88).[109]

The question arises why Ratnākara made this single allusion to the Purāṇic version? It might be that he had in mind some pictorial or sculptural representation of the scene such as that in Cave 15 at Ellora, where Cāmuṇḍā is virtually as prominent as Śiva himself. Even this episode Ratnākara has played down, since in the Purāṇas this drinking up of the blood is the purpose for which the Mothers are created, and it is thus a fateful event; whereas, in the *Haravijaya*, the Mothers already exist, first seen dancing with Pārvatī in the second *sarga*. But the accepted image of Andhaka's death was, I suggest, too forceful for Ratnākara to ignore one of its most prominent details.

The influence of visual representations will be considered when I review the episodes and scenes this chapter has dealt with. However, several other aspects of the poem's conclusion should first be mentioned.

To my suggestion that the Andhaka myth is muted, and in effect secularized, it might be objected that there is no muting, no secularizing of Śiva. Admittedly, fire shoots from Śiva's mouth, and prodigious flames emanate from his trident's prongs; and above all, perhaps, he brings his slain soldiers back to life. But surely any king would aspire to victory as great, as assured, and so ultimately painless, as Śiva's. *Mahākāvya* sets out to describe the world it would like to see. That said, even this account of Śiva reflects the muting of Andhaka's significance. In the Purāṇas, Śiva burns up Andhaka with the fire from his third eye, but this eye is that of enlightenment and as a result Andhaka becomes enlightened and is provided with a third eye himself.

> The motif of the eye is central to the myth of Andhaka; just as he is born of Śiva's eye, and born blind, and given to a demon named Golden-eye, even so he is destroyed by Śiva's eye and finally purified and reborn through it.[110]

[109] This latter detail is to be found only in the *Haravijaya*.
[110] O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, p. 171.

In Ratnākara's handling, there is a studious lack of reference to the third eye at this crucial time. Fire seems to come from anywhere but the third eye! As for the fortunate army that is made as good as new, is it not the case that Ratnākara, denying Śiva's grace towards Andhaka, compensates for this denial by finding new scope for grace?

Nectar is the most important of the good things beloved of *kāvya* that could not be absent from the final verses. Others are the intoxicated bees, present on the flowers showered from heaven; the precious stones, shaken loose from crowns in the very last verse;[111] and the lusting nymphs. But it is of nectar that there is much to be said here. We have already seen nectar as the product of the poetic process;[112] and Ratnākara speaks of the 'rich nectar' of his own verses.[113] Śiva's heart is imbued with the nectar of love for Pārvatī (1.50). The profoundest nectar, the richest of all, is found in the hymn to Caṇḍī. Praise of her who removes all terrors is nectar in itself: 'Whose tongue, tasting drops of nectar, loses its taste for them?' (47.166). But she is herself the ultimate source of nectar:

> Imagining you enthroned amid the lotus of the sky,
> within the full moon its pericarp,
> and showering down nectar,
> your devotee quickly surpasses death. (47.134)[114]

She is 'the totality of the supreme nectar overflowing with the waves of creation' (47.97).

Set against the goddess as fuller than the full moon with mystic nectar, the nectar from the digit on Śiva's head is weak, and used for lesser ends. Śiva is upstaged by the goddess of *sarga* 47. But the result is that he is closer to the human condition, more human in fact, here at the end of the poem. We may contrast Śiva here with the Śiva addressed by Utpala in this verse from his *Śivastotrāvalī*:

> Direct your gaze upon me, O lord!
> your wonderful nectar-shedding gaze

[111] Precious stones have to be present because the last verse of every *sarga* includes the poet's signature, *ratna*, 'jewel'.

[112] See p. 112.

[113] See p. 104.

[114] Already quoted above, p. 265.

like the digit of the moon,
luminous, cooling, pure, unique.[115]

For Ratnākara this aspect of Śiva is to be found in the Goddess. Śiva's nature is fire, fire that here comes from his mouth and his trident. Such nectar as he has comes from part of his paraphernalia, and only then via his hand, to be distributed in that terrestrial fashion, rather than passing directly from its source above.

At this juncture, we may also compare and contrast the tridents of *sargas* 47 and 50. Śiva's trident performs the function of burning otherwise performed by his third eye. In Kaula symbolism, the trident is manifested to Śiva by the Goddess (47.97). The prongs are the universe as created, preserved and destroyed. She manifests the universe to Śiva who perceives it by virtue of her. Thus, by comparison Śiva's trident, prodigious though its fiery power is, can only be mundane.

The mutual relationships of the major scenes and episodes presented in this chapter, can now be considered more generally. They comprise the dance of Śiva (*sarga* 2); the hymn to Śiva, which is preparatory to the first mention of Andhaka (*sarga* 6); the merging of Śiva and Pārvatī (*sarga* 23); the Caṇḍīstotra (*sarga* 47); and the death of the demon. These divine events are major both within and without the poem. Each of them requires a whole *sarga* for its expression. (In *sarga* 50 only the last quarter of the *sarga* is really important, but the preceding account of the duel where the god and the demon at first seem evenly matched is, of course, essential.)

Dancing Śiva (Śiva Naṭarāja), Śiva and Pārvatī conjoined (Ardhanārīśvara), and the impaling of Andhaka (Andhakavadha) are major sculptural themes, which Ratnākara recreates after his own fashion. Andhaka on the trident, with Cāmuṇḍā holding her bowl beneath has been dealt with very briefly by Ratnākara; but the length at which he treats the two other themes suggests that he was influenced by and attempted to capture the effect of what surely are the two most wonderful plastic representations of Śiva. At the same time, the brevity of

[115] *Śivastotrāvalī* 3.5:
prakāśāṃ śītalām ekāṃ śuddhāṃ śaśikalām iva/
dṛśaṃ vitara me nātha kām apy amṛtavāhinīm//

the final scene is emphatic, and the whole extent of the poem is reduced to a fine point—the culminating thrust of the trident.

After the initial immobility of the poem's opening verse, we have in the second *sarga* the aesthetic activity of Śiva, his dance, the successive variations of his most personal form, playing, subsuming all purpose within himself. We may see this activity as a symbol of the process of *kāvya*. In *sarga* 23 Śiva joins with Pārvatī to embody the poem's movement to a still centre point. The divine couple precede and give divine example for the copulation of *sarga* 27. Ardhanārīśvara is the symbol of *kāvya*'s deepest enthusiasm. Finally, the brief thrust of the trident that destroys the demon. Successful action in the harsh world of power politics!

These scenes are each separated one from the other by the two hymns of devout and philosophical praise. The hymn to Śiva is calm and static. Śiva's principal actions are to produce the world through his agent Ananta and to pull up the individual soul in the bucket that is *OṂ*, without hands. Śiva here is the formless absolute standing above the individual soul, which is merely a spark of Śiva's fire, and can only hope to attain to likeness of the lord. There is an interesting difference here between the two hymns, for the core of the forty-seventh *sarga*, Kaula Śāktism, is implicitly monistic, even if this is only once stated:

> Making manifest intense awareness
> in the treasure of the void
> just as you encompass
> the sphere of saṃsāra, the nature of the universe—
> acting so it is surely you alone
> who are the primal illumining power
> of the awareness of the Buddha with his ten powers,
> of the experience of all beings,
> and of Parameśvara himself.[116]

Why should the poem on its philosophical level move from dualism to monism? It poses no problem for Ratnākara himself to be a dualist Śaivite and a monist Kaula—personal syncretism

[116] spaṣṭībhavadgaganagañjacitiprakarṣam
ātmīkṛtākhilasatattvagatiprapañcam/
kāpi tvam eva nanu dāśabalāvabodha-
sattvānubhāvaparameśvaradevatādyā//47.94//

is perhaps the rule rather than the exception. But the division between dualism and monism within the poem is made more complex by that the fact that Śiva is remote and Caṇḍī is not. Her monism is flanked by her contradictory images of destroyer and saviouress. Perhaps *sarga* 6 and *sarga* 47 can be explained as follows. While things are well-ordered and clear-cut God can be remote and partless, aloof at the top of the well; but amid the disorder of battle the usual order of life is surpassed. A deity more horrible and yet more loving, more anomalous, is needed; and also a richer philosophy. The trident of spiritual power transcends and foreshadows the actual implement of the mythological Śiva.

I remarked above, after quoting Kramrisch on the Andhaka myth, that all this, which is to say the Purāṇic version of the myth, was too much for *kāvya* to handle. There is certainly much that Ratnākara wants to ignore. But what he does use, he puts to magnificent effect. The clear differentiation of the major scenes, and their interrelationships, are superb. Beyond the fact that three are sculptural themes anyway, the five scenes form a pictorial combination analogous to, say, the panels at Elephanta. *Kāvya* in general has statuesque qualities; and inherent within the basic form of the *mahākāvya* is the firm disposal of reality into separate categories, into distinct tableaux vivants on separate stages. Ratnākara's disposition of the divine is a further development of these tendencies.

CHAPTER 9

Symbols

The gods and the goddess, the women and the *gaṇas*, all have specific parts to play in the poem. We have now to consider the background of symbols against which the action takes place.

Symbolism, so important and complex in Hinduism, has been little considered in *kāvya*. Ingalls implies a lack of symbolism in *kāvya* in these remarks on the artificiality of Sanskrit:

> As a general rule Sanskrit was not a language of the family. It furnished no subconscious symbols for the impressions which we receive in childhood nor for the emotions which form our character in early adolescence. Sanskrit was therefore divorced from an area of life whence the poetry of what I would call the natural languages derives much of its strength.[1]

A strange blindness to the presence of symbols in *kāvya* lies behind the following gibe:

> If, as Kafka said, poetry should be a pick-axe to free the sea frozen within us, then most of Sanskrit poetry fails utterly. Most *kāvya* cannot reach us in our most primitive minds the way that Proust, or Lawrence, or Joyce can. In reading through the *Dhvanyāloka*, one is struck by the disparity between the theory and the literature to which it is applied. The poems themselves do not represent values more universal than their time.... If we demand of our best literature transcendence, then these works seem to fail us.[2]

This statement seems to me to be very wide of the mark. So far as our primitive minds are concerned, it may be observed that *kāvya* is virtually swimming in sexual symbolism. Many of its favourite themes call out for Freudian interpretations. In the churning myth, the paramount myth in *kāvya*,[3] Mandara is the

[1] Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 6.

[2] Masson and Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa*, p. IX. Given my remarks in Chapter 2 on the relationship between poetics and poetry, it should not surprise us that the authors of such stimulating and important studies in poetics show themselves to be profoundly out of sympathy with *kāvya*.

[3] In as much as it is not only popular but also uniquely applicable to the process of *kāvya* itself. See my remarks above, p. 232 and p. 112; and cf. Gonda's review of Ingalls, *Anthology*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 37/1, 1967, pp. 94–9, p. 98.

phallus, the milk ocean the vulva, and the nectar semen.[4] The white fame that spreads abroad from the brave and active man is, as Derrett has clearly shown, ultimately semen.[5] That mountains had their wings cut off is an expression of fear of castration.[6] If we are to speak of primitive mind, *kāvya* can be said to be in communication with it! As for transcendence, a poem such as the *Haravijaya*, which pays considerable attention to dancing Śiva and Parameśvara, is hard to beat.

Kafka's notion of a frozen sea is alien to India. In *kāvya*, the sea contains the submarine fire, and it is churned by Mount Mandara. *Kāvya*'s audience was supposed to respond quickly and directly to the poem, to be a mirror to it. This smooth relationship is very different from chipping away at ice. And yet Kafka's image does have an oblique relevance. The content of *kāvya* is strictly limited: at a certain point in time themes and images as it were froze.

Only rarely was there any innovation; and there was no pick-axe. Thus it comes about that many modern readers are put off by what they see as the frozen artificiality of *kāvya*. Yet all literature deals in stereotypes to some degree, and as in Ratnākara's case the handling of stock themes can transform their significance. The frozen conventions of *kāvya*, its ice lumps, are in fact powerful symbols, or can be made to be so by the poet's emphatic usage. In this chapter I point out these symbols, some of which are obvious, so that their contribution to the poem's overall effect can be appreciated. In a few instances Ratnākara, I suggest, made ad hoc symbols, personal crystallizations.

The 'Freudian' explanations attempted above will not be pursued further, though I shall not entirely eschew them. To say, as Ratnākara does, that his poetry is great in scope (*prasara-guru*),[7] is to say that it is deep. The notion of depth, particularly unseen depths, is expressed in *kāvya* not only by the submarine fire, but, equally dramatically, by the subterranean world (*pātāla*)

[4] Róheim partially notes this symbolism, speaking only of Mandara—'great penis symbol': G. Roheim, *The Panic of the Gods* (New York, 1972), p. 204.

[5] See Derrett, 'Bhū-bharaṇa', pp. 119–21.

[6] For the related fact that mountains used to fly, cf S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Harmondsworth, 1976), p. 518.

[7] See above, pp. 114–16.

where the great white snake dwells in darkness. These configurations, though precise, might be said to parallel Western notions of the subconscious, in so far as they could, conceivably, be taken to symbolize the unseen depths of the human personality. Certainly, Indian thought accommodates with ease the notion of the subconscious, inasmuch as our immense, our infinite histories as reincarnating selves make us all repositories of infinite experience. Without yogic *pratibhā* this experience is lost to us, but symbols, it may be argued, are a form of contact with the subconscious, with the traces (*saṃskāras*) of previous lives.[8]

In the first place, *kāvya* has certain notions about the workings of nature which are peculiar to itself These notions are based on myth or on perverse natural history. Examples are winged mountains, the pregnancy of trees, and fancies about precious stones.

The second type of symbol shows the exuberance of *kāvya* rather than a desire for counterfeit nature: I refer to the pure white form which is the manifestation of fame and beauty.

Thirdly, there is the symbol which embodies tension between opposites, of which Ratnākara makes great play. The prime example is the moon accompanied by its spot (the deer or hare in the moon). There is also the shining milk ocean producing the black *kālakūṭa* poison; and another instance is the submarine fire.

The lotus heads a group of more subdued natural symbols. The importance of the mirror merits its own category. And finally, there are Ratnākara's own ad hoc symbols.

Kāvya's fancies, my first category, are little used by Ratnākara, but are worth discussing for their general significance. Indra's cutting off the mountains' wings, a brief story in a Vedic text,[9]

[8] According to Kālidāsa (*Śākuntala* 5.2), it is 'beautiful things and sweet sounds' (ramyāṇi...mudhurāṃś ca...śabdān) which evoke memories of former lives. This view is unduly restrictive. The verse, and Abhinavagupta's comment on it, are discussed by Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience*, p. 60, fn. 4; and by Masson and Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa*, pp. 57 ff.

[9] 'It is told very tersely in the *Maitrāyaṇi-saṃhitā* 1.10.13: "The mountains are the oldest children of Prajapati (the creator). They had wings. They flew wherever they willed. Then this (earth) became unstable. Indra cut off their wings, and steadied this (earth) by means of these (mountains). The wings became clouds. Therefore the clouds are ever floating towards the mountains, for this is their place of origin." ' M. Bloomfield, 'Contributions to the Study of the Veda', *American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 17, 1896, pp. 399–437, p. 399.

so impressed later poets that it became a stock theme in *kāvya*. Ratnākara uses it once or twice, as here: there being cloud round the mountain where the sun set, the mountain looked as if its limp wings were half cut off by the thunderbolt and moistened by the flowing blood (19.10). A partial explanation of *kāvya*'s predilection for this theme might be its delight in cutting down to size, its obsession with the imperfection of the perfect. Rather as the moon is tainted with its spot, the great and glorious mountains have lost their power to move. Analogous is another stock theme: the sage Agastya stamps down the Vindhya mountain when it attempts to rival Meru in height (9.55).

Other fancies are more recent in origin, but likewise present altered forms of natural phenomena. Firstly, the flowering of trees.

> In poetry we have the exquisite notion that the sudden blossoming of trees in the spring is a kind of birth, preceded by a pregnancy fancy. The fulfilment of that fancy is [thought] to be the necessary preliminary to the perfect event. The kadamba tree suddenly buds forth at the beginning of the rainy season, when the thunder rolls—sign that the kadamba craved to hear the thunder, before giving birth to its buds. The bakula (vakula) tree, before bearing blossoms, must be sprinkled with wine from the mouths of young women—that is its whim. Above all, the aśoka tree must be touched by the foot of a maiden, or young woman, before it blossoms—again the whim of the pregnant plant, say, or imply, the Hindu poets.[10]

Ratnākara uses this conceit almost as rarely as that of the mountains' wings. An *aśoka* tree blossoms when kicked by a woman (17.31), the *bakula* tree when sprinkled with wine from a woman's mouth (17.40). This rarity of reference contrasts with Ratnākara's enthusiasm for certain other symbols such as the submarine fire, which occurs almost a hundred times. The poet's lack of enthusiasm for direct reference to fertility[11] is symptomatic of *kāvya*, and is perhaps the very cause of the convention under discussion.

This is what Ingalls has to say on the subject:

[10] Maurice Bloomfield, 'The Dohada or Craving of Pregnant Women: A Motif of Hindu Fiction', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 40, pp. 1–24, p. 2.

[11] See above, pp. 201–3, and also p. 187.

> There is a superstition that the *aśoka* tree will blossom only at the touch of a young woman's foot. Doubtless the kick was intended originally as sympathetic magic to insure a woman's fertility. But the classical poets took up the superstition for its prettiness and added that other flowers had similar whims of pregnancy.[12]

However, the earliest reference to the 'superstition' is in the poets themselves. In the epics, trees are masculine; and in *kāvya* men are trees to women who are creepers. Trees are, of course, associated with fertility. Queen Māyā gives birth to the future Buddha holding the branch of a *śāla* (*Vatica Robusta*) tree. But what *kāvya* does is reverse the natural order: the woman helps the tree, not the tree the woman; and there is no sexual cross-fertilization, so to speak, for female here acts on female. *Kāvya* evades the parturition of women. Trees suffer pregnancy longings and give birth,[13] leaving women free to be sex symbols.

Jewels feature in three conceits which may be included in the present category. Popular with Ratnākara are the conventions that snakes have jewels in their heads and that elephants have pearls in their temples. Snakes are thought to guard treasure in their holes, in India as elsewhere in the world—the inclusion of the jewel in the snake's head is, I suggest, a convenient abbreviation of this popular belief. In line with this transposition of roles from guardianship to incorporation, is an instance of trees taking on the role of guardian: the trees on Mandara, as if they could not bear to lose sight of their hoards of treasure in the earth below, ‹spread wide›/‹opened wide› (*visphārita*) their ‹roots›/‹eyes› (*netra*) (5.31). Mountains generally are supposed to be rich in precious stones: *kāvya* tinkers with nature and supposes that the Vidūra mountain sprouts beryl when it thunders[14] (like the *kadamba* tree). In all three instances the ornamental intention of *kāvya* is embodied in living form.

Lacking the intrinsic peculiarity of these fancies, though strange to the newcomer to *kāvya*, is the notion that fame takes the form of white light,[15] and beauty that of white liquid. The

[12] Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 111.

[13] Lotuses also give birth, and the ocean's tide gives birth to the moon. See above, p. 189. In the instances there cited, childrearing is a thankless task. Even jewels are considered to be the mountain's children: Mandara has a harness for the jewel-children on its flanks in the form of their rays (5.25).

[14] See above, p. 239.

[15] Other poets speak of it as liquid, as Derrett notes.

exuberant power of these symbols is never muted. Fame and beauty exist without reference to their opposites. Dishonour is scarcely mentioned, ugliness not at all. Beauty relates only to women, and women are never ugly! The shame of dishonour is pallid—it has no dark force to be set against fame: when the demon Druma subdued his foes, the pallor of their shame was hidden by the white rays of his toe-nails reflected by their bowed faces (16.61).

Fame pertains only to warriors, whether they are gods, *gaṇas*, or demons. The moonlight of Prabhāmaya's fame illumined all the quarters (9.10). The goose of Vahnigarbha's fame flew through all the three worlds (10.2 and 3). Puṣpahāsa's fame, a necklace white as moonbeams, gleaming with the pearls that are good qualities, was the supreme ornament of the quarters (14.7). The white moon-digit of excellent fame which rose up from the milk ocean of battle wherein his sword formed the streak of *kālakūṭa* poison, Andhaka made his ornament (16.13). Note that the milk ocean has the black mark, not fame: conversely, the moon, usually accompanied by its spot, when itself the symbol or metaphor of a strong symbol, as here, is itself strong—unsullied.

Fame does not necessarily belong to anyone in particular: on Mount Mandara, the lions who tear open the temples (frontal globes) of elephants have fame manifest in their paws in the form of pure pearls clinging there (5.61). That elephants have pearls in their temples is another type of symbolism, discussed below; but it may be noted that here there is a double symbolism of semen. The elephant is a symbol of strength; its rut is dark in colour, but *vīrya* must have semen as its source,[16] and so, underlying the rut that appears from within an elephant's temple, poets conceived that there was semen, but spoke of it by the pearl symbol.

The liquidity of beauty is expressed by the word *lāvaṇya*, which also means 'saltiness':[17]

[16] Derrett notes that *vīrya* is 'a characteristic inseparable from possession of abundant semen', 'Bhū-bharaṇa', p. 121.

[17] '*Lavaṇa* is the flavor (*rasa*) par excellence, for one adds salt not sweetness to food to bring out its taste. Since the word *rasa* is used ... of everything that excites one's interest, curiosity or aesthetic sense, it is appropriate that *lāvaṇya*, as an abstraction of the chief *rasa*, should be used of a particularly striking type of beauty.' Ingalls, 'Words for Beauty', p. 99.

Like the ocean's tide, a woman,
‹the splendour of Crocodile-bannered Love›/
‹splendid with the crocodiles which are its characteristic›,
bearing aloft a sprig of coral
in the form of her lower lip,
‹delighting the people on the path›/
‹carrying off people on the shore›,
was possessed of ‹beauty›/‹saltiness›.[18]

The wall of Śiva's city forms a basin for the beauty streaming from the women's face-moons (1.23). The rays from the women's emerald necklaces were trails of duckweed in the waters of their beauty (23.9). The moon reflected in one woman's cheek was splendid, for its spot was washed away by the stream of the waters of her beauty (23.27).

The third type of symbol may be termed tensive. Here there is tension between opposites. Lacking the vitality of fame and beauty, purity finds it difficult to exist unsullied. Thus the shining milk ocean produces the black *kālakūṭa* poison; the moon is never free of its spot, and is liable to be swallowed by Rāhu, the eclipse demon. In addition to the vulnerability of white to black, the sun, which dispels darkness, is threatened by Rāhu and is, moreover, the victim of Takṣaka's chisel. Only with the submarine fire are opposing forces balanced: the ocean is too large to be consumed by the fire to any noticeable extent, the fire is too strong to be extinguished by the huge expanse of water.

Ratnākara points to a psychological significance in this type of symbol. In Śiva's city, the moon, surpassed by the beauty of the women's faces, seems to descend to the netherworld in the guise of its reflection in the jewelled pavement, for the spot in its centre is, punningly, despair in its heart (1.31). It were best the submarine fire burnt up the ocean goddess, since she cannot wipe clean the moon which has arisen from her body (11.69). The ocean has the blues—the smoke of the submarine fire in its heart—on account of its inability to wipe away with its towering waves the stain from the moon, its own offspring (22.63).

[18] bibhratyā samakaraketanaśriyoccaiḥ pratyagrām adharadalapravālavallīm/
mārgasthaṃ hariṇadṛśā janaṃ harantyā lāvaṇyaṃ jalanidhivelayeva
bheje//17.30//

I have followed Ingalls in translating *makara* as 'crocodile', although it is in fact a specific mythical sea-monster, well known in art.

The poet's imagination is endlessly fertile with parallels for the moon and its spot, the simplicity of the image making it the more serviceable. More than once a succession of verses is devoted to this theme, as of course in *sarga* 20, the description of the moonrise. To begin with, the spot is merely a lump of mud on the moon as it rises from the ocean (20.4); but later it is a pot on the wheel—the moon—of Time the potter (20.18).

When the moon first rises it is red with the evening's glow. Thus, its red disc with the spot resembles the seed-pod of Viṣṇu's lotus which was split when Brahmā came forth from it (20.12). We see here that imperfection is necessary for the creation of the world, and that the moon's spot symbolizes this. But phenomenal life is all too vulnerable: the moon's spot is a hole made by the mountain it rose from, and as the moon gradually becomes white in the sky the redness of evening is its blood flowing away (20.15). And the spot parallels the wound that Balarāma (black Kṛṣṇa's white brother) received from the hooves of Dhenuka the donkey demon (20.17).

The disc of the moon is a wall-painting of Kāma and its spot is Kāma's attendant crocodile (20.21): the moon and the spot are indeed canvas and paint for Ratnākara to portray what he pleases. Like is compared to like when the mark on the moon is said to resemble the *kālakūṭa* poison in the milk ocean (20.20), but there is the great difference that the latter symbol is replete with mythological significance:

> The churning of the ocean is the classic image of creation by means of chaos—the disruption of the serene primeval waters in order that all the oppositional pairs may emerge and meet in creative conflict. In the course of this process, the agents of the churning (the gods and the demons) become differentiated, for at first they are united in their task, but then they are opposed. The basic symbolic dialectic is that of liquids, the neutral water which is transmuted into various elixirs—human (milk), ritual (butter) and divine (mead, ambrosia, or Soma)—as well as into the reversal of all elixirs—poison.[19]

Beyond its role as a tensive symbol, the moon has a degree of power: it resurrects Kāma (destroyed by Śiva) in women's hearts (1.8) and it causes the ocean to rise, and night-lotuses to

[19] O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, p. 273.

open, day-lotuses to shut. But set beside the rich meanings of the churning myth, the moon is a poor thing. And yet within the *Haravijaya* the symbols have equal weight, because the moon allows the greater freedom to the poet's imagination.

The submarine fire is to the highest degree a tensive symbol. Firstly, there is the opposition of fire and water, often expressed in terms of pain. The ocean's foam looked like a coating of sandalwood paste brought by the rivers to allay the violent heat of the submarine fire (22.48). The ocean's waves rise up as if longing for the cold touch of the moon to allay the burning heat of the submarine fire (22.57). Caṇḍeśvara's laugh passing his red lips is like the foam of the ocean of fortitude agitated by the submarine fire of anger (13.7). The fire's smoke provides another element. The ocean's eyes are pearl-shells—troubled by the smoke from the submarine fire, the ocean shed pearl-tears (22.33). The columns of smoke from the submarine fire, stretched out by the wind and with sparks like red flowers, looked like the long braids of the rivers in the ocean's lap (22.37).

At doomsday the fire bursts forth from the ocean which had contained it and destroys the universe.[20] Prabhāmaya describes this happening (9.28–37). The submarine fire is closely connected with Śiva's fiery third eye; his eye is sometimes said to be the source of the submarine fire.[21] Ratnākara punningly compares the submarine fire to Śiva's third eye, the one burning the ocean, the other Kāma (22.47); and the evening sky illumined by his eye resembles the expanse of the ocean lit up within by the submarine fire (8.10).

Ratnākara occasionally refers to the mythical fact that the fire is contained within the mouth of a mare.[22] Agnidaṃṣṭra declares that the mare's mouth is an inappropriate place for that fierce radiance which properly belongs to a raging warrior (11.50). In fact, Ratnākara uses the submarine fire mainly with reference to heroic ardour. Thus Vahnigarbha tells Kālamusala that a fiery person like him cannot calm himself without slaying his foes; the submarine fire never ceases to burn the ocean (10.45). Prajaṅgha burns up the ocean of the foe with the flames

[20] See above, pp. 176 ff, and fn 66.

[21] O'Flaherty cites three late Purāṇas, *Mythology of Śiva*, p. 290 and p. 371.

[22] O'Flaherty explains the mare, ibid., p. 292.

of his valour's submarine fire (16.57). Such images occur many times. Now, although the *gaṇas*, as we have seen, manifest their fieriness in sparks and smoke, one of the features of the submarine fire is that it is, at least partially, hidden. Agnidaṃṣṭra says that the sun which illumines the world is limited in extent, unlike the unbounded radiance in the brave man's heart (11.61). Whereas the spot on the moon symbolizes the limitations of perfection, the submarine fire as a metaphor for heroism symbolizes the potential perfection (glory) of the imperfect. When successful, the warrior is associated with the 'strong' symbolism of fame.

It might well be thought that there is nothing more perfect than the sun, dispeller of darkness, but as we have just seen, Agnidaṃṣṭra thinks otherwise. So too does Ratnākara on several other occasions as well. *Kāvya*, as seeker after perfection, is fully aware of imperfection. When Mandara churns, the flames of the submarine fire form a circle, making it seem that the sun has fallen from the sky because Mandara is no longer supporting it (4.4). The women break up the lustre of the sun with the ‹lustre›/‹shadow› (*chāyā*) of their blue-lotus eyes (18.1). The sun is a mirror Śiva dirties with the dust from the mountains he has crushed in his dance, though in this instance the damage is made good by the cleaning with ashes from his arms (2.42). The setting sun is likened to the head of the day cut off by the sword of time, its rays so many trickles of blood (19.23). In the hot season, it was so hot that people thought yet another piece of the sun had been cut off by the chisel (3.39).[23] The radiance of the sun is in some sense detracted from also by the green colour of the horses which draw his chariot.[24] Thus the ruby archway of Śiva's city, reflecting the green horses, is hung with festive garlands (1.22). Moreover, the foam from the mouths of these steeds provides blossom for the groves on Mount Mandara (17.5).

I turn now to the lotus, most important of Indian symbols. My rudimentary typology cannot hope to do justice to the lotus.

[23] According to the Purāṇas, the daughter of Viśvakarman (the gods' architect and artificer) married the sun but found her husband too hot. Her father, otherwise known as Takṣaka, 'The Cutter', cut off an eighth part of the sun, and from this part, which fell to earth, fashioned the weapons of the gods.

[24] Presumably the horses are green to symbolise the green vegetation the sun fosters in spring.

However, in association with the bee, the lotus can be considered a tensive symbol. There is a colour contrast between the white lotus and the black bee: in the evening, the lotus that was the day, its pericarp the sun, its petals the eight quarters, contracted, its row of bees the gathering darkness (19.1). Far more frequently mentioned is the sexual contrast. The lotus is female, the bee male. But it is not a case of 'a lover and his maid' as Peterson once put it.[25] The lotus is static, the bee is mobile and goes from flower to flower.[26]

The lotus might conceivably come under the heading of tensive symbol on the further grounds that it can be both a 'strong' symbol and a symbol of weakness, but this is probably to overextend a category that at best is tentative. As a strong symbol the lotus is a symbol of totality: the universe is conceived to be a lotus, as in 2.31,[27] 7.19 and 30. Similarly, the day is a lotus (19.1 and 10). Strength and weakness combine without the least tension in the lotus as origin of the world, primal vegetable growth, springing from the navel of Viṣṇu as he lies on the cosmic waters.[28] The lotus is 'strong' as the omnipresent symbol for parts of the body—face, hands, feet, eyes, signifying beauty and delicacy.

Like the physical beauty of women, the lotus is particularly subject to the ravages of old age. Ratnākara mentions ageing almost solely with reference to lotuses. In winter, the lotuses whitened by the old age of snow flakes pain the bees (3.80). Indeed, the lot of bees is very different. In the autumn a creeper overcomes old age to suckle a bee baby with its flower-breast (3.76): bees are eternally young, eternally spoiled, like the lovers they symbolize. But in two bold puns Ratnākara reverses the weakness of the lotus. ‹White-lotuses› are ‹tigers› (*puṇḍarīka*) their filaments manes (19.62); and, whereas elephants are usually said to trample in lotus-ponds, in one instance a lotus-pond itself is Love's victorious elephant, a lotus-bud its tusk (5.45).

Much of the symbolism of the lotus is self-evident, springing

[25] P. Peterson, 'On the Subhāṣitāvali of Vallabha', *Actes du 6e Congrès International des Orientalistes*, Troisième Partie, sect. 2, Aryenne (Leyden, 1883), p. 358.

[26] See above, p. 197.

[27] See above, pp. 246 ff.

[28] See above, pp. 234 ff.

naturally from the nature of the plant. Similarly obvious is the symbolism of other plants and of animals. The following remarks of Ingalls concerning spring may be applied to all the seasons and to Ratnākara's treatment of nature in general.

> Spring to him [the court poet] was beautiful not for the beauty of its birds and flowers so much as for the harmony with which human nature accompanied physical nature's changes....every motion of the world of nature meets an exact response in the human heart ... and if humans are subject to the laws of nature, at the same time nature is viewed in wholly human terms.... In this atmosphere everything is symbolic.[29]

The elephant is a symbol of extreme strength, the lion is a symbol of extreme valour, Passing over other 'natural' symbols, we may single out the bee as the most interesting of this third category of symbol. The bee is the self-indulgence of man.[30] ‹Black› in colour, the bee is ‹wicked› (*malina*) in character. It flits from flower to flower, seeking only its own advantage. When snow lies on the lotus, the bee abandons it: the ‹black bee›/‹wicked man› always abandons his friend in adversity (3.85). Bees are intoxicated by the nectar of flowers. Drunken bees with their wives tumble into a lotus as onto a couch brightened by a coverlet (3.21). As though they had put together many juices to form an elixir, the happy bees lay inert, beyond distress (3.6). At night a bee resembles a magician: quaffing its elixir and humming its spell, it breaks into the sanctuary of a night-lotus (20.28). The humanity of the bee is confirmed by the frequency with which it is accorded or becomes the faculty of speech. By the humming of bees the day-lotuses address sweet nothings to their lover the sun (5.9). The bee humming as it drinks the flower-nectar seems the panegyrist of spring (5.95). When the lotus city opens its gates at dawn, the bee-bards are heard to sing (28.34). While on her lotus couch Lakṣmī was praised in the songs of the bee-minstrels (13.56).

[29] Ingalls, *Anthology*, p. 112. This passage is cited by Lee Siegel, *Sacred and Profane Dimensions of Love*, p. 202. Siegel offers an admirably broad account of the symbolism of the lotus, night, and spring, pp. 195–205.

[30] Kalhaṇa directly and aptly compares courtiers to bees, *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 4.375 'While the courtiers [in the reign of Kuvalayāpīḍa], lusting for presents (*dāna*), moved to and fro between the two [princes], their treasure fared badly, like the temple-juice from the two temple-holes of an elephant in rut, when the bees, lusting for the fragrant secretion (*dāna*), move to and fro between them.' (trans. Stein).

The fifth type of symbolism is 'mirror' symbolism. In Buddhism and Kashmir Śaivism, the image of the mirror is profoundly significant.[31] It is also a key analogy for the aesthetic process.[32] But in the *Haravijaya* there is none of this. At best, there is once or twice a mention of knowledge as a process of reflection. Just as there is no reflection in a dirty mirror, so too the impure mind is unaware of Śiva (6.163). In his initial eulogy of the demon leader, Kālamusala says that his mind is wisdom's mirror, clearly reflecting the whole science of policy (32.85). In philosophy and aesthetics, reflection is accurate and a communication of truth. This is generally not the case in *kāvya*. Mirrors sometimes serve their purpose, but reflections usually deceive. The confusion of Duryodhana in the *Mahābhārata* when visiting Yudhiṣṭhira's wonderful palace—mistaking a crystal floor for a pool he draws up his clothes, and then making the opposite mistake sets out confidently to walk across a pool, to the great amusement of the onlookers[33]—is a condition in which *kāvya* revels.[34] Moreover, in addition to the many reflecting surfaces in the *Haravijaya*, as in other poems,—crystal walls, cheeks, toe-nails, sword-blades and so on—in addition also to the related 'solidification of light',[35] the central mechanism, the 'as if' (*iva*), the *līlā*, the positing of an alternative state of affairs, is itself nothing but a misleading reflection of reality.

The poet resembles the man in this verse:

> A woman,
> frightened because only newly married,
> was unable to look even in the direction of her husband;
> then, when he was behind her back
> and she viewed him in her mirror,
> he blew upon it,
> and she was alarmed because his face was indistinct.[36]

[31] Cf. Jean Naudou, 'Symbolisme du Miroir dans l'Inde', *Arts Asiatiques*, Vol. XIII, 1966, pp. 59–83.

[32] See above, pp. 49 ff.

[33] Māgha describes this incident, *Śiśupālavadha* 13.59 and 60.

[34] Cf. above p. 52 and also, p. 226.

[35] See above, p. 174.

[36] bhītā vadhūr abhimukhaṃ na śaśāka bhartur
udvīkṣituṃ yad acirodhatayā kathaṃ cit/
pṛṣṭhāgatasya vadanaṃ śvasitāhate'tha
paśyanty adūyata tad asphuṭam ātmadarśe/ /23.53/ /

However, at doomsday Pārvatī has the advantage of seeing Śiva's face reflected in the mirror of the golden shell of Brahmā's egg, even as it splits open (8.22). Ratnākara is fascinated by mirrors. Not only does he refer several times to the process of the cleaning of a mirror's metal surface with ashes (e.g. 2.42, 8.39, 14.6), he also mentions its manufacture. Grinding down and heating, Andhaka turns the circle of his foes into a mirror—they submissively watch his face to detect his wishes, and he can see his face in them (*vidviṣām vyadhān maṇḍalaṃ mukhavilokana kṣamam*) (14.20).

These types of symbol are standard conventions of *kāvya*. They become symbols by their frequency in the poem, by Ratnākara's insistence upon them. The backcloth in front of which the actors—*gaṇas*, demons, women, and gods—play their parts often dominates the scene. The final type of symbol according to my classification, however, is ad hoc and infrequent The prime example is the inverted bird of 17.21:

The women noticed on the path before them
the peculiar shape of a castor-oil plant.
Its leaves were like the feet of a bird on its back,
claws outstretched
on long black legs.[37]

The image of the bird, I have suggested, symbolizes the women's sexual role. Here, as with the gnashing teeth of *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 573,[38] the experience of the characters in the verse crystallizes about some material object and is thereby rendered precise. Another image is the drop of sweat in 17.102:

As she sweated
a fawn-eyed woman who had wandered into the mountain wood
put on a show for her lover:
on her jutting breasts
‹the marks›/‹the acts›
of nails were resplendent,

[37] uttānasthitivikarālakālajaṅgha-
vyākośāṅgulikhagapādanirviśeṣam/
saṃsthānaṃ tanutaraṇālapattram agre
nārībhiḥ pratipatham aikṣataurubūkam//17.21//
For annotation and comment, see above, pp. 198 ff.

[38] See above, pp. 52 ff.

‹spotted with the clinging droplets›/
‹wonderful because including
the development of the plot›.[39]

In this case, the image crystallizes not the experience of the woman, but of the development of the poem itself, the smooth development of the poem which leads to semen and the merging of Śiva and Pārvatī.[40]

Again, the ocean in *sarga* 22 is used in a way different from its normal symbolism, in a way which breaks free from convention. The ocean in *kāvya* is a common, and natural symbol, of immensity; it is also connected with female beauty through the word *lāvaṇya* ('saltiness'). In religion it symbolizes both the phenomenal world (*saṃsāra*) and the infinitude of the divine (e.g. Śiva as ocean of bliss). However, Ratnākara's name means 'Ocean', and it follows that the ocean can symbolize Ratnākara. It may be that in some sense he juxtaposes himself as the ocean, theme of *sarga* 22, to the core of the poem, the merging of Śiva and Pārvatī in *sarga* 21. At the same time, it may be relevant that in the fifth of his verses appended to the *Haravijaya* Ratnākara claims to have swallowed the ocean of speech, and links himself to the sage Agastya, who swallowed the ocean. Within the poet, therefore, there is an oceanic immensity. Further, in the sixth appended verse Ratnākara says that he blazes forth like a fire. The submarine fire burns in the ocean. Is not the submarine fire, one of the most frequent symbols in the poem, and connected with the human psyche (as a symbol of heroic ardour) by the *gaṇas* and demons, at the same time a symbol of Ratnākara's poetic genius?

[39] bhrāntāyā giritaṭakānane mṛgākṣyāḥ
prekṣyatvaṃ dayitatamasya jagmivāṃsaḥ/
svidyantyā babhur avalagnabinducitrāḥ
prottuṅgastanataṭavartino nakhāṅkāḥ//

[40] See above, pp. 201 ff.

CHAPTER 10

One Figure of Speech

Symbols such as those just considered are a kind of natural growth, forming themselves imperceptibly and manifesting themselves to the reader gently and persuasively. From hidden and unconscious meanings I turn now to examine the way in which Ratnākara, deliberately and openly, splits reality in two. I shall examine his use of the pun, *śleṣa*.

In his personal statement, Ratnākara proudly announces that his poetry is unrestrained in difficult *yamaka* and *śleṣa*. The word for 'difficult', *vikaṭa*, could equally well be translated as 'monstrous', and the unsympathetic critic might point this out as all too true. Keith remarks of the poem that Ratnākara's 'fondness for Yamakas adds to its inherent dreariness.'[1] But, as I briefly showed in Chapter Four, very interesting effects can be achieved with the *yamaka*. Verses which at first sound like rhyming nonsense—the further the rhyme spreads through the line the greater the semblance of nonsense—subsequently yield a straightforward meaning, a meaning which in its freedom from ornament and wit often sounds surprisingly modern in translation. The disjunction in quality between sound and meaning is extreme. No doubt Mammaṭa felt that the strength, the vivacity of the *yamaka* was too prone to be an independent force when he remarked that *yamakas* are 'like worms within the body of poetry'.[2] Figures of speech in general have recently been spoken of as 'little reservoirs of energy'[3]: the fault that the New Critics and some modern readers see in the *yamaka*, *śleṣa* and the other flashy figures of speech (*citra*) is basically that they have too much energy.

No figure has more energy than the pun. Shakespeare's puns, which were frequent, have been described as ranging from 'a mere squib' to 'one which goes off like high explosive'.[4]

[1] Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 135.

[2] kāvyāntargaḍubhūtam, *Kāvyaprakāśā* ed. Subhadra Jhā, with Eng. trans. by Ganganath Jha (Varanasi, 1967), p. 327.

[3] Brian Vickers, *Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry* (London, 1970), p. 12.

[4] M. M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London, 1957), p. 164.

Whilst *śleṣa* in Sanskrit is by no means precisely parallel to the pun in English, the suppleness (and artificiality) of the former language permitting far more extensive doubling of meaning, the notion of explosive force is not inappropriate. At the same time 'All the subtler states of emotion, as I. A. Richards has pointed out, necessarily demand metaphor for their expression'.[5] If for 'metaphor' we read 'figures of speech',[6] we here see the leader of the New Critics of recent times turning upon its head the theory of the New Critics of Ratnākara's day. At all events, puns, like other powerful *citra* or flashy *alaṃkāra* are destructive of pure *rasa* and create 'the subtler states of emotion'. These states, these effects, are produced in the *Haravijaya* with special vehemence by puns. *Śleṣa* is the most noteworthy feature of Ratnākara's style, just as it is of his professed model, Bāṇa.

It should be noted that *śleṣa* is intimately connected with the joint form, the total 'embrace' of Śiva and Pārvatī. Apart from this special connection, the literary pun is clearly empirically related to the equivocation and duplicity which may fairly be inferred to have been present in court society. The court's influence is manifest when Ratnākara uses the pun to make sexual innuendo, to express contempt, to mock, and to make learned allusion. Then again, turning from the question of external origins, there are to be distinguished those puns which relate to far more in the poem than their immediate context, and could, perhaps, be allowed to be 'high explosive' puns; they are no more powerful, however, than the 'fusion' puns applied to Śiva and Pārvatī.

Before looking at the application of the pun to Śiva and Pārvatī in the *Haravijaya*, it will be helpful to refer for a moment to Ratnākara's othe poem, the *Vakroktipañcāśikā*. (These fifty

[5] Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn* (New York, 1947), p. 9.

[6] Metaphor seems to have subsumed all other figures of speech for recent English and American literary critics. Thus George Whalley in the *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton, 1974), gives the following very broad definition of metaphor: 'A condensed verbal relation in which an idea, image, or symbol may, by the presence of one or more other ideas, images, or symbols, be enhanced in vividness, complexity, or breadth of implication'; and goes on to remark, 'In recent years the view has gathered weight that metaphor is the radical process in which the internal relationships peculiar to poetry are achieved.' (p. 490). Another contributor to the same work, s.v. Figures of Speech, states that 'with Coleridge there was the beginning of a system in which it may be said that all figures of speech aspired to the state of metaphor.' (p. 274).

verses of punning conversation (*vakrokti*) between Śiva and Pārvatī have an organic unity which entitles them to be called a single poem.) The first verse has Śiva and Pārvatī combined in a single body, but with Pārvatī wishing to leave. In accord with the philosophy of Kashmir Śaivism, the imperfect is implicit in the perfect. The freedom (*svātantrya*) necessarily possessed by the divine permits the perfect union to be disrupted. This disruption remains potential as the couple alternate from verse to verse in punningly outwitting each other. The 'crooked speech' or *vakrokti* engaged in by the parents of the universe presents a divine model for the more variously 'crooked' language of the poet of the *Haravijaya*. If word and meaning are joined together like Śiva and Pārvatī as Kālidāsa tells us at the beginning of the *Raghuvaṃśa*, for Ratnākara there are tensions and divisions between word and meaning, just as there are quarrels between Śiva and Pārvatī:

> 'I'm jealous of Twilight (Saṃdhyā) and I won't stay in your body.'
> 'If you're not pleased, my girl with beautiful thighs,
> with our union (*saṃdhi*), I suggest
> you tell me what your quarrel (*vigraha*) is.'
> 'How dare you! What have I to do with catching birds (*vi-graha*)?'
> May this crooked speech of Śiva and Pārvatī
> in playful mood
> bring you good fortune.[7]

All the verses in the *Vakroktipañcāśikā* are similarly benedictory. Śiva and Pārvatī enjoy their tiff, and by their punning make each other laugh or smile throughout. Their enjoyment is said to bring the reader happiness and prosperity. By contrast, the *mahākāvya* uses puns to express the perfect undivided unity of the divine couple. The separation of the pair is the ultimate cause of the phenomenal world, of which the tensions and imperfections are also often well expressed by puns.

When Ratnākara uses *śleṣa* to describe the union of the god

[7] *Vakroktipañcāśikā* 4:

> no saṃdhyāhitamatsarā tava tanau vatsyāmy ahaṃ saṃdhinā
> na prītāsi varuru cet kathaya tat prastaumi kiṃ vigraham/
> kāryaṃ tena *na* kiṃcid asti śaṭha *me* vīnāṃ graheṇeti vo
> diśyāsuḥ pratibaddhakeliśivayoḥ śreyāṃsi vakroktayaḥ/ /

This is the text as emended by Carl Bernheimer, 'Über die *vakrokti*', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 63, 1909, p. 819.

and goddess, it seems to me that the figure of speech can hardly fail to succeed, so appropriate is it for the purpose. And *śleṣa*'s importance in the *Haravijaya* is most clearly demonstrated as *sarga* 21 draws to its close:

The body of Śiva and Pārvatī,
undivided, ever thus displayed its beauty—
‹celebrating the evening›/‹delighting in their union›,
beautiful with
‹the king of snakes for girdle-string›/
‹an excellent girdle-string›,
the face
‹having the dread third eye›/
‹giving many sidelong looks›,
‹characterized by the excellent digit of the moon›/
‹adorned with garments of invincible majesty›.[8]

I have written of Śiva and Pārvatī's merging in this *sarga* as the heart of the poem. The erotic build-up of the pleasure sequence finds therein its archetypal resolution. It is also a still point on the journey the poem makes from Śiva's state of ease on his private mountain to his defeat of the demon after the long battle, a journey via the manifestation of the goddess as a separate force in her own right, separate from Śiva. This punning verse and the one which follows it are the culmination of the *sarga*. The loving woman and the dread god are smoothly joined together by the wordplay here. Is not the joy the poet speaks of just afterwards partly the joy he felt in writing this verse?

Moon-crested Śiva
intent on making something new
like a poet «writing» a play
thus «placed» in half his body half of Pārvatī
‹who is resourceful in arousing passion›/
‹wherein *rasa* is fostered and the protagonist makes his resolve›,
‹her character unaltered›/
‹including the hero's style of procedure›,
the abode of ‹good qualities›/‹the poetic excellences›,

[8] saṃdhyāhitotsavavikāsam ahīnakāñcī-
dāmābhirāmam aniśaṃ vikaṭākṣavaktram/
lakṣmīm anuttamahimāṃśukalāñchitaṃ sad-
āviścakāra śivayor vapur ity abhinnam/ /21.55/ /

‹the characteristics of her beautiful limbs renowned›/
‹with the fine and well-known dramatic characteristics
and subdivisions of the opening›,
‹joined to him›/‹provided with the junctures of the plot›,
—he had ‹a woman›/‹joy› in his heart.[9]

With reference to the discussion of banality and orginality in Chapter Four, we may here note how Ratnākara subsumes within his verse the originality upon which Śiva and the dramatist are intent. Further, the poet has in mind, I think, Śiva and Pārvatī watching a play immediately after their wedding as mentioned by Kālidāsā in the *Kumārasaṃbhava* (7.91). The fact that the divine union parallels the procedure of dramaturgy confirms the ability of that literary device, the pun, to capture it. The poet's boldness in comparing a poet to Śiva must be noted.

Ratnākara renders the process of divine union more precise by the parallel spelling out of the procedures of dramaturgy, an art more technical than his own. When a modern novelist writes in her final chapter, 'In the end parting had come with the inevitability of the last scene of a well-constructed play',[10] she, in the same way as Ratnākara, is utilizing the fact that drama is the more highly ordered art, its movements better defined. At a further remove, Pārvatī as Śiva's *śakti* is the creative force which brings forth the phenomenal world, and as such is justly paralleled with that lesser but more nearly perfect creative act, the drama.

Ratnākara refers to *rasa* in both technical and non-technical (the passion Pārvatī arouses) senses. According to Ānandavardhana, either reference would be destructive of the proper suggestion of *rasa*; taken together, and with the rest of the verse, the whole effect would be disastrous. Uncommitted to any prior theory, we can be receptive to the subtle effects to be found here. I have already mentioned the validity of the joy in the poet's heart. 'A woman' (*pramadā*), who is really *the* woman, and 'joy' (*pramada*) beautifully complement and reinforce each other.

[9] *iti* rasapoṣayuktimad anujjhitavṛtti guṇavyapāśrayaṃ
prathitaśubhāṅgalakṣaṇam apūrvakṛtipravaṇātmatāṃ dadhat/
kavir iva nāṭakaṃ ghaṭitasaṃdhi vidhāya śaśāṅkaśekharaḥ
śikharisutārdham ardhavapuṣi pramadānvitamānaso'bhavat//21.57//
Cited above, p. 259.

[10] Barbara Pym, *The Sweet Dove Died* (London, 1978), p. 205.

Ratnākara several times brings an explicit reference to *rasa* into his puns, almost as if he were deliberately flouting the strictures of Ānandavardhana! Thus this verse from the pleasure sequence:

> When the women with their lovers
> had gone deep into the woodland
> it came to pass that they saw from afar
> the river of the gods
> like the joint body
> of Śiva the Trident-bearer
> and Pārvatī, Daughter of the Mountain,
> delightful
> ‹with its pleasing sandbanks›/
> ‹in the unison of their emotion of pleasure›.[11]

This pun is much easier to assimilate than the previous instance. The intimate union of river with sandbank goes excellently with the joint body. Furthermore, sandbanks marked with the prints of birds' feet are often in *kāvya* compared to a woman's thighs marked by her lover's nails; and, I would add, sandbanks become visible in the course of the year as rivers recede to a voluptuous languor. As a matter of fact, the pun here achieves a rare 'unison of emotion'. Ratnākara manages to point to this.

One of *kāvya*'s favourite themes from nature is closely analogous to the union of Śiva and Pārvatī: the sunset union of day and night; and here Ratnākara again makes good use of the pun to give the effect of fusion. In the following, as in the preceding example, the fusion is redoubled by the comparison with Śiva and Pārvatī:

> The beauty of both day and night,
> like that of moon-crested Śiva
> and Pārvatī the mountain's daughter,
> then increased,
> ‹creating a new colour of red›/
> ‹passionately coming together as for the first time›,
> ‹being of great abundance›/
> ‹immersed in their happiness›,

[11] preyobhiḥ samam avagāhya kānanorvīṃ
dehārdhasthitir iva śūliśailaputryoḥ/
rāmābhir na rucirasaikatābhirāmā
nāloki tridaśataraṅgiṇī vidūrāt/ /17.109/ /
Cited above, p. 201.

‹as was proper for evening time›/
‹brought about by their union›,
occurring undivided in both corporeal beings.[12]

Like the other verses so far considered in this chapter, this is connected with the actual union of Śiva and Pārvatī in *sarga* 21. The day is ending and the night of lovemaking is about to begin. The pun on *rāga*—‹red›/‹passion›—is one of the commonest in *kāvya*: it comes first in the sequence of puns, leading the way into the rich conjunctions of meaning that follow. In the one case there is a spreading out, in the other a concentration, an interpenetration. Day and night have 'creation', Śiva and Pārvatī 'coming together' from the word *ghaṭanā*; *gāḍhasampat* applies to the beauty of light that spreads across the sky, and the inner, absorbing fulfilment, the happiness, experienced by the divine couple.

In the *śleṣa* of *kāvya*, as distinct from that of the Veda, Renou discerned a 'fundamental indecision'.[13] But as we have seen, Ratnākara can use the pun to produce a decisive and satisfying fusion. Here is a final example:

The two young people,
whose bodies gradually expanded with horripilation,
then ‹became timid›/‹shrank›
but were, in their embrace,
having long ‹suffered›/‹been heated›,
welded together in all their limbs.[14]

The pun can weld, but its action is more frequently divisive, to crack apart everyday reality. For example, immediately after the verse on the beauty of both day and night, cited above, we have in that *sarga* a dramatic contrast:

[12] pratyagrarāgaghaṭanendukalākirīṭa-
śailādhirājasutayor iva gāḍhasampat/
saṃdhyāhitātha divasakṣapayoḥ śarīra-
bhāgadvayāviralavṛttir ajṛmbhata śrīḥ//19.6//

[13] See above, p. 99.

[14] romāñcapīnatanutāṃ dadhatoḥ krameṇa
samprāptayos taruṇayor atha kātaratvam/
āliṅganena cirasambhṛtaviprayoga-
taptākhilāṅgaghaṭanā sudṛḍhā babhūva//25.70//
Cited above, p. 221.

Reddening the quarters of the sky
with masses of thick minium dust
red as blood—evening's manifestation,
the beauty of the day
‹thronged with hundreds of sparrows hastening home›/
‹distraught at the approach of the thunderbolt›
like a row of mountains
fell into the sea.[15]

How bizarre and how delicious is the conjunction of sparrows and mountains flying together through the evening sky, with the further spice that the self-important bustling little birds return to their nests as normal whilst the huge mountains have to plunge into the sea in their panic! The minium or red lead, so profuse on *kāvya*'s mountains, is prophetic of the blood the mountains will shed when Indra cuts off their wings.

Ratnākara here is deliberately indecisive as to the nature of reality. This is characteristic of his *śleṣa*. It will be helpful at this stage to briefly consider the origins and causes of *śleṣa* in *kāvya*. In Chapter Four I referred briefly to dissimulation as the art of the court. From that perspective, the 'fundamental indecision' of *śleṣa* can be seen as an expression of the inherent instability of the court and the political system. Viewed from within, however, *śleṣa*, along with other forms of equivocation, is a necessary tactic, a means of survival. It is a demonstration of power over one's circumstances, this demonstration of power over language. Little as is known about the Hindu court, there is much relevance in the Elizabethan poetician's proposal that to succeed the poet need only conduct himself 'like a verie Courtier which is in plain termes, cunningly to be able to dissemble'.[16]

By and large the transposition of *śleṣa* from what I see as its origin in the court to its role in the poem necessarily affects its character, but not always. The 'crooked speech' of the *Vakrokti-pañcāśikā* clearly belongs to the court. In the *Haravijaya* there is an effective allusion to ladies gossiping about the doings of the king or any notable:

[15] saṃdhyāpravṛttirudhirāruṇasāndradhātu-
dhūlicchaṭākapiśitāmbaradigvibhāgā/
adhyamburāśi giripaṅktir iva nyapaptad
abhyāpatatkuliśatākulitā dinaśrīḥ//19.7//

[16] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poetry*, ed. G. D. Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), p. 299.

'He's abandoned the eastern quarter,
his abundant ‹redness›/‹passion› spent,
and now
all at once
he wants to go to the western!
The other quarters ...
them he ‹brightens›/‹soothes›
‹with the descent of his rays›/
‹by falling at their feet›
which surpass the beauty of white day-lotuses.'[17]

Speaking so in the buzzing of bees
and clapping too, it seemed,
as the night-lotuses opened out
and were knocked against each other
by the strong night breeze,
the beds of night-lotuses laughed long this night
at the moon, the night rover.[18]

Do they applaud the adroitness of the lover as well as their own wit?

As a Hellenistic rhetorician stressed, innuendo is 'appropriate when addressing potentates, or a dangerous assembly.'[19] This use of *śleṣa* is clearly exemplified in the *Śiśupālavadha*, when Śiśupāla's envoy simultaneously expresses defiance and submission. More complex are the paradoxes addressed to Śiva by Spring at the head of the gods' delegation, which have been discussed earlier,[20] but now call for further comment.

Well, well! a likely lover you
for Mother Nature!
You can't do anything anywhere,
you ‹of wide extent, without emotion or birth›/

[17] pauraṃdarīṃ diśam apojjhya viluptarāga-
sampat kṣaṇāj jigamiṣaty adhunā pratīcīm/
anyāḥ prasādayaty nirjitapuṇḍarīka-
śobhāgrapādapatanaiḥ kakubhaḥ salīlam/ /20.53/ /

[18] naiśānilāhatiparasparaghaṭyamāna-
saṃphullakairavatayālikulapraṇādaiḥ/
uktveti hastatalatāḍanayeva naktaṃ
naktaṃcaraś ciram ahāsi kumudvatībhiḥ/ /20.54/ /

[19] The view of Demetrius in his *On Style*, as presented by G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (London, 1965), p. 119 fn. 2.

[20] See pp. 227 ff.

‹very fat, and bereft of passion or even sentiment›,
‹bodiless›/‹your body contemptible›,
‹devoid of sensory perception›/
‹unemployed; incapable of any copulatory position›[21]

O lord! Without beginning or end,
not begetting yet engaged
in generating the universe,
though you ‹are the source of the constituents of matter›/
‹have your origin in merit›,
you are not praised for lineage![22]

It is not impossible that the *Haravijaya* had some political relevance, perhaps allegorically urging the king of Kashmir to take action against a foe. Were that the case, with Śiva to some extent standing for Cippaṭa Jayāpīḍa, it must be remembered that the king was a boy (killed by his uncles when he 'emerged from childhood') and that his mother was of low caste, the daughter of a village distiller.[23] Reread with those facts in mind the two verses could be innuendo indeed.

We are on the margins of our subject-matter here; but another verse, a good example of a pun giving edge to contempt, could bear a similar interpretation:

What this envoy of Śiva's has said
so coolly,
is just like a child.
All that sort of thing can be said
in ‹one's father's house›/‹a graveyard›
where ‹mother›/‹the Mātṛs› will listen eagerly.[24]

Śiva's home is a graveyard where he is attended by the Mothers, when he is not credited with a city such as Varaṇāsi, or Jyotsnāvatī on Mount Mandara in the *Haravijaya* (1.4). But

[21] prathitaprapañcarasabhāvavarjitaḥ kvacid eva kiṃcid api kartuṃ akṣamaḥ/
avapur gataḥ karaṇavṛttiśūnyatāṃ prakṛter aho nu sadṛśo'si kāmukaḥ/ /6.19/ /

[22] jagatām anādinidhanasya tasthuṣo janakatva eva jananojjhitasthiteḥ/
tava nātha saty api guṇādisaṃbhave na hi saṃbhavaty abhijanāśrayā stutiḥ/ /
6.72/ /

[23] See above, p. 2.

[24] yad bālabhāvasulabhaṃ śaśalakṣmamauli-
dūto'bhyadhād ayam aśaṅkitacittavṛttiḥ/
vaktuṃ kṣamaṃ pitṛgṛhe tad aśeṣam eva
śrotāsti yatra rabhasena sa mātṛvargaḥ//35.13//

Cippaṭa would have lived in his father's house, with his mother very much in attendance;[25] the envoy of a child would naturally be said to speak like a child. It is stimulating to try to see the poem in its contemporary setting, but we can go no further in this direction.

In their debate the *gaṇas* show themselves at times to be sophisticated courtiers. They employ puns to show that they have mastered their destiny. That is the way I interpret, for instance, Caṇḍeśvara's pun on his sword blade and that famous place of pilgrimage, the Puṣkara lake (*puṣkara*) (13.72); and the following:

> Now, O lord of the world!
> let the battlefield of gods and demons
> resemble Vṛndāvana
> ‹with the remarkable sight of packs of female jackals
> and their mates
> freely wallowing deep in blood
> when satiated with the marrow they've drunk›/
> ‹with the beauty of the auspicious and delightful
> herdsmen's station,
> just the place
> for the women deeply,
> and plainly devotedly,
> in love with Kṛṣṇa.›[26]

When the sword blade is a pilgrimge and the battlefield Kṛṣṇa's pastoral paradise, the courtier's wit, by being able to enforce the strange conjunction, shows its supremacy, albeit no doubt temporary, over both war and religion. The pun helps the courtier make light of serious matters.

Ratnākara's use of *śleṣa* is, I think, most reminiscent of possible court practice when it is used to show that the speaker, or the poet himself, is well-informed. It is quite remarkable that all or

[25] Her brothers acted as regents during his life; they 'respected her directions', and the only new building mentioned in her son's reign is her, Jayādevī's, shrine of Śiva, Jayeśvarī (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, 4.681).

[26] saṅgrāmabhūmir adhunā bhuvanādhinātha
vṛndāvanasthitir ivāstu surāsurāṇām/
vispaṣṭapītavasanādaratātigāḍha-
raktāṅganocitaśivābhimatavrajaśrīḥ//13.75//

In the case of the battlefield, Ratnākara seems to use *vasa* for *vasā*, 'marrow', followed by *na-ādara-tā*.

almost all references to technical terms of bodies of knowledge, whether music, dancing, dramaturgy, painting, poetics, grammar, logic, yoga, medicine or politics, are made punningly in the poem. A detailed study of Ratnākara's learning is outside the scope of the present study, but it is important to note that his references are never esoteric (outside the two philosophical *sargas*, 6 and 47, which are special cases), and never beyond the compass of the educated layman. The punning introduction of technical terms asserts mastery of the subject. In this respect the example of the Elizabethan courtier is illuminating:

> The less the courtier displays his expertise, the more of it he is assumed to possess. He must shun long-winded discourse and the tedium of explicitness. His is a world so responsive to indirection that nonchalant detachment may not only imply the courtier's real ability, it may suggest an even greater ability than actually exists. ... Ultimately, courtly grace is inseparable from dissimulation, since part of being graceful always consists of suggesting virtues and talents either greater than or contrary to what is visibly enacted.[27]

Thus Raghavan is led to assert that the *Haravijaya* 'is a storehouse of information for the researcher in Nāṭya-śāstra,'[28] whereas, in point of fact, all Ratnākara's allusions in that area are to the basic text of Bharata, save only one or two references to other authorities no less basic, cited by the commentator but now lost. Instances of dramaturgical terminology used have been quoted sufficiently.[29]

I turn now to those puns which I have ventured to call 'high explosive'. *Bindu* in 17.102 deserves such a title;[30] here is another instance. The verse is deceptively simple. Śiva's envoy has entered the enemy citadel, and for the first time beholds Andhaka in all his glory:

> His form resembling Durgā—
> ‹seated on his throne›/
> ‹enthroned on her lion›,
> as dark in colour as the *tamāla* tree,
> fangs gleaming in ‹his›/‹her› mouth.[31]

[27] Daniel Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton. 1978), pp. 57 ff.

[28] V. Raghavan, *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāra Prakāśa*, p. 567.

[29] For 1.2 see p. 237.

[30] See above, pp. 200 ff.

[31] tatra siṃhāsanāsīnāṃ tamālaśyāmalatviṣam/
sphuraddaṃṣṭrānanāṃ mūrtiṃ kauśikīm iva bibhratam/ /32.49/ /

The pun inspires and begins the comparison. I am sure that Ratnākara was led into making the comparison in the first place by the word 'throne', *siṃhāsana*, which more literally is 'lion-seat'. The dual image created is a true *śleṣa*, in that an identity of the demon and the goddess is achieved, a union of the fierce aspect of the 'mother' and her unnatural 'son'. In the Purāṇic version of the myth, to which Ratnākara never refers, Andhaka lusts after Pārvatī; here the two figures briefly merge. More directly, it can be seen that the 'son' is taking after the 'mother', despite Ratnākara's striving, as I have shown, to obliterate this aspect of the myth. Above all, Durgā or Caṇḍī is going to be prominent in the attack on Andhaka, and one of her manifestations, Cāmuṇḍā, will drink his blood. The verse amalgamates the opposite poles of the poem, which necessarily burst apart when one considers their significances.

Ratnākara's use of *śleṣa* is insistent, throughout the poem and throughout the verse, usually, in which it occurs. Ānandavardhana uses the expression *ekarasa*, 'obsessed' when he berates poets who neglect *rasa* through their obsession with figures of speech,[32] and by that expression he concedes a powerful emotional commitment to the ornamentalist, even if a commitment entirely misdirected from his point of view. Milton, like Shakespeare, was fond of puns; it has been said of his 'verbal wit' that it may have 'safeguarded' his poetry 'from the perils of neo-classical decorum by breathing into it a primitive or personal zest.'[33] One could take a somewhat similar view of Ratnākara's case.

[32] See above, p. 50.

[33] F. T. Prince, *The Italian Element in Milton's Verse* (Oxford, 1954), p. 129 fn. 1.

CHAPTER 11

Śiva's Victory

The *Haravijaya* is great in scope. Its symbolism, given weight by Ratnākara's emphatic joy in images and conventions used only sparingly by other poets, and increased by his original ('ad hoc') symbols, provides depth of meaning. The well positioned and beautiful hymns to Śiva and Caṇḍī (both divinities closely associated with the syllable OṂ, the transcendence of speech[1]) provide elevation of meaning. And in extent Ratnākara's poem is an ocean.

Despite the *Haravijaya*'s great scope, I have sought to present it as a whole. It has a unity, a life of its own, vivacity even. Ingalls likened his presentation of Vidyākara's anthology, *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*, to the awakening of Sleeping Beauty. I cannot pretend that the *Haravijaya* is another Sleeping Beauty. Not unlike Baroque art in general, the *Haravijaya* is remote from our own day and our own vision.

Critic and reader alike have to work at a poem like the *Haravijaya*, but the fact that the poem is demanding is not, I think, a fault. The reward is in proportion to the effort. At the beginning of my study, I quoted a verse which claimed that Ratnākara's poem was worth more than a thousand milk oceans and a hundred pots of nectar.[2] Be that as it may, the critic and the reader of today have themselves to churn the poem to make it produce its good things, its nectar. I hope, and believe, that I have not salted the mine.

The proper assessment of the *Haravijaya* has as its essential prerequisite comparison with other *mahākāvyas* which have been studied in at least equal depth. However, I offer the following tentative conclusions.

It cannot be denied that the poem is too long, but it is good poetry. It is not beautiful poetry, except in so far as 'Exuberance is Beauty'.[3] Ratnākara probably set out to write beautiful poetry.

[1] For OṂ in *sarga* 6, see above, pp. 252 ff; in *sarga* 47, see verses 61–92.

[2] See above, p. 4.

[3] *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, line 10; *The Writings of William Blake*, ed. Keynes, Vol. 1, p. 186.

In other words, he explicitly intended to produce nectar, to create an ideal world; implicitly (I have suggested),[4] to counteract the insecurity of the court and the kingdom. But the poet's intention, conscious or unconscious, is one thing; the result is another.

The following verse from Jalhaṇa's anthology, quoted earlier, is again apposite:

> Within the nectarous sea of good poetry
> there's neither submarine fire
> nor *kālakūṭa* poison.
> Yet, strange to relate,
> the supreme inconvenience to arise
> is the knave plunging into it.[5]

Disregarding the second half of the verse, we note how different is Ratnākara's from the poetry defined in the first half of the verse. Ratnākara claimed that his verses 'pour forth surging *rasa*—the rich nectar of bliss'[6], but as we have seen both the submarine fire and the *kālakūṭa* have an important part to play in it.

The *Haravijaya*, Ratnākara tells us, is 'beautiful because it is based on the deeds of Śiva whose crest is the digit of the moon'.[7] However, the very first verse of the poem states that Śiva contains the *kālakūṭa* poison. In addition to frequent mention of the poison itself, the demon is another manifestation of its malevolence. The joyous calm of Mount Mandara is disturbed by news of the conquests of Andhaka, 'The Blind One'; and yet, just as Śiva absorbed the poison, the wicked demon is his son. The removal of one evil is followed by the production of another. The hymn to Śiva, the utterly transcendent Parameśvara, is succeeded, as the poem draws to its close, by the hymn to Caṇḍī, wild goddess of destruction. The art of dancing Śiva is forgotten in the almost unending distresses of the battlefield. The poem closes with a single violent image, one of the most

[4] See Chapter 3, passim.

[5] *Sūktimuktāvalī* 4.26:

> satkāvyapīyūṣasamudramadhye na vāḍavāgnir na ca kālakūṭaḥ/
> tasyāvagāhena tathāpi citraṃ khalasya tāpaḥ paramo'bhyudeti//

Cited above, p. 113.

[6] sāndrāmṛtarasaparispandaniḥsyandinīnām asmadvācām. See above, p. 111.

[7] candrārdhacūlacaritāśrayacāru kāvyam. See above, p. 104.

horrible in all Indian art: the demon dangles, his blood sizzling, on the uplifted trident. The emaciated Cāmuṇḍā (in the Ellora relief, a sprawling giantess) drinks his blood from her skull cup. The terror of the scene is not muted, as it is in the Purāṇas, by Śiva pardoning his progeny. Upon the annihilation of the demon, the light, the force previously emitted from the god returns to him.

It is this same fiery force of Śiva's which appears as submarine fire. Particularly closely related to the submarine fire and the other 'tensive' symbols is Ratnākara's brilliant use of *śleṣa*. In Ratnākara's extended puns, the world splits apart. Nothing is certain: any verse may suddenly show itself to contain two contradictory meanings. And at the same time, just as Śiva merges with Pārvatī, the pun smooths away oppositions and incompatibilities. However, uncertainty is, I think, the predominant impression left on the reader.

The *kālakūṭa* poison is metaphorically present throughout the poem in the illusory world created by similes and other 'ornaments' (*alaṃkāras*). Unhappiness and inadequacy are freely attributed to the non-human world. Mirrors are dirty, and the mountain fears that its jewel-babies are flawed (5.25). Perhaps this dispiriting element, this *kālakūṭa*, arises necessarily from the pursuit of perfection? Such tensions help the poem live. The fire of Ratnākara's genius continues to burn, not least because his nectar is laced with poison. Nevertheless, although sombre reality obtrudes upon shining wonder, Śiva is victorious. *Haro vijayate.*

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